

TODAY

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Time now for talks, says Adams

Ceasefire call to the IRA by Sinn Fein

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER AND NICHOLAS WATT IN BELFAST AND PHILIP WEBSTER

THE IRA was last night expected to declare a ceasefire in response to a call from Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president.

Mr Adams said he had called on the IRA leadership to restore the 18-month ceasefire that ended with the Docklands bombing in February 1996 because the Labour Government had removed the obstacles to serious peace talks posed by John Major's administration. He expected a swift and positive response.

An unequivocal IRA ceasefire would allow Sinn Fein to join the all-party peace negotiations set to begin on September 15, but there were serious doubts developing last night about whether those negotiations will take place.

Unionists were dismissive of the IRA move, insisting it was nothing more than a tactic to get Sinn Fein into the talks. It had come, they said, after the Government had made serious concessions to Republicans, with an assurance that the decommissioning of terrorist weapons was not needed before Sinn Fein could enter talks.

Peter Robinson, the Democratic Unionist Party deputy leader, said: "Why would the IRA not call a ceasefire? They have got everything they have asked for."

The ceasefire move comes after considerable movement in the past few weeks, includ-



Adams' assurance by London and Dublin

ing telephone and written contacts between Sinn Fein and the Northern Ireland Office under Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary. But after a meeting in London yesterday, Mrs Mowlam and Sir Bruce, the Irish Foreign Minister, said they were standing firmly behind a joint document on the decommissioning of IRA weapons that Unionist leaders have labelled unacceptable.

The Unionist parties are threatening to vote the document down on Wednesday because it offers no guarantee that decommissioning will begin early in the talks and they believe Sinn Fein wants to negotiate with "guns under the table".

In calling for a ceasefire, Mr Adams said he had received the assurances he needed that

the British and Irish governments were committed to serious negotiations on the future of Northern Ireland without preconditions. Those negotiations would be completed within a stated timeframe. The decommissioning issue would not be allowed to block negotiations. No outcome would be precluded, meaning that Northern Ireland's position within the United Kingdom could be debated.

Mr Adams said his announcement was also based on the commitment of Bertie Ahern, the new Irish Prime Minister, to pushing for "significant and substantial change" benefiting the nationalist community in Northern Ireland.

In an aside, he said he was "confident that the mistakes that were made by the former Taoiseach, John Bruton, will not be repeated and that Sinn Fein will be accorded full equality of treatment."

Since the election Tony Blair's Government has, despite Unionist anger, gone out of its way to meet Sinn Fein's concerns. It has made clear that the decommissioning issue would be considered in parallel with, and not before, serious peace talks. It offered Sinn Fein admittance to those talks within six weeks of an unequivocal ceasefire, and an assurance that the talks would be completed by next May. It

Continued on page 2, col 6



Prince's party: Camilla Parker Bowles arrives at the Prince of Wales's country retreat in Gloucestershire last night for her 50th birthday celebration

Champagne birthday at Highgrove

BY SIMON DE BRUNELLES

EIGHTY close friends of the Prince of Wales and Camilla Parker Bowles gathered at his country estate in Gloucestershire last night for a party to celebrate her 50th birthday. It was the most public of private events, trumpeted as a milestone in the couple's affair.

Mrs Parker Bowles was the first guest to arrive. Wearing a dark blue sleeveless silk dress and a glittering

necklace, she turned and smiled for the cameras before being driven through the Street Farm entrance of the Prince's country retreat.

She was sitting in the passenger seat in a black Vauxhall Omega estate as the car went through the gates of Highgrove House shortly after 7 o'clock.

As other guests arrived half an hour later, they were ushered into the reception room for champagne and

canapés, while a large press contingent was kept safely at arm's length outside the gates of the well-protected 350-acre estate. Dinner was served in a 120ft marquee.

Last-minute arrivals included the disco from Joffins, which provides music for the Dorchester Club, and a lorry from the Convenience Company carrying portable lavatories.

The weather for the event was perfect, if muggy, and guests were

expected to work off the five-course dinner dancing to classics from the last 40 years played by an orchestra.

The guests included many friends who had known the Prince and Mrs Parker Bowles since their youth. Among them was expected to be her husband, Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles.

The guest list included most of the couple's close circle of

Continued on page 2, col 7

Cash pours into building societies

Nearly £2 billion poured into building societies last month as speculators bet on which would be the next to convert into a bank. The head of the Building Societies Association said: "This reveals the intense pressure societies are under from competitors." Page 25

Warm spell

As schools in England and Wales break up, forecasters said the weather would be warm and sunny next week. Forecast, page 24

WEATHER	24
CROSSWORD	24
COURT & SOCIAL	22
LETTERS	21
OBITUARIES	23
SIMON JENKINS	20
BUSINESS	25, 28, 40, 41
MONEY	29, 39
SPORT	42, 48
WEEKEND	
GARDENING	46
PROPERTY	3, 10
TRAVEL	15, 21

Sotheby's ends regular London antiquity sales over 'smuggling'

BY STEPHEN FARRELL AND DALYA ALBERGE

SOOTHEBY'S is to end regular antiquities sales in London. The decision comes five months after allegations that the firm sold artefacts that had been smuggled into Britain.

Now the world's oldest auction house will hold only occasional sales in London from collections of unquestioned provenance. All other sales will go to New York.

Two of Sotheby's leading London experts, Oliver Forge, head of antiquities, and Brendan Lynch, head of the Islamic and Indian department, left the company this week in the wake of the decision.

Sotheby's move has been prompted by increasing concern among archaeologists that the £100 million international antiquities market encourages looting and the illicit excavation of religious sites in such countries as India, Italy and Egypt.

A far-reaching internal review of Sotheby's international dealings and auction-room practices was announced in February by Diana Brooks, its New York-based chief executive. Her decision came after disclosures by Peter Watson in Sotheby's Inside Story, which was serialised in The Times.

He and investigators from the Channel 4 Dispatches programme secretly filmed Indian dealers boasting that they smuggled artefacts removed from religious sites that later appeared in Sotheby's catalogues. There was no evidence that Sotheby's knew the source of the items.

The investigators also videotaped Rosalind Kollwitz, Sotheby's Milan Old Masters expert, offering to smuggle a 19th-century portrait to London. He later resigned.

The internal review is expected to report in the autumn, but a Sotheby's spokes-

man confirmed last night that the withdrawal from London was part of a continuous process. He said: "It has always been Sotheby's policy to be sensitive to issues of patrimony and heritage. In response, however, to recently expressed concerns on these issues, Sotheby's is making modifications in its Indian and its Antiquities departments. We will continue to hold certain single-owner sales in London, when appropriate."

Sotheby's to review code of conduct

From The Times dated February 11 this year

Ousted Tory MPs still seek jobs

BY STAFF REPORTERS

ALMOST a third of the Conservative MPs who lost their seats at the general election have yet to find full-time employment.

A survey by The Times of the 127 defeated Tories found that 37 are still looking for work or taking time off to consider their options.

A further ten are making a precarious living from part-time consultancy or occasional lecturing and media work. Six have retired.

Among several Cabinet ministers without full-time work are Michael Forsyth, Ian Lang and Jeremy Hanley.

Many former MPs did not expect to lose and had made no preparations for life outside Parliament. As several former MPs' wives said: "There is nothing more 'ex' than an ex-MP."

The average age of the defeated Tories is 53.

Defeated Tories, pages 12, 13

Hamlyn gives name and £17m to South Bank

BY DALYA ALBERGE ARTS CORRESPONDENT

LONDON'S South Bank Centre is to be renamed The Paul Hamlyn Centre on the South Bank after a multi-million-pound gift from one of Britain's most generous philanthropists.

The reclusive Paul Hamlyn, who shares the fortune he made in publishing with needy arts and charitable causes, is believed to have given as much as £17 million to the complex.

The South Bank Centre would not confirm the figure, but described it as one of the largest-ever contributions by a private individual to an arts project in Britain.

The money will go towards the planned transformation of the decaying Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, Poetry Library and Hayward Gallery.

The Centre is awaiting news within the next few weeks on its bid for lottery money from the Arts Council and National Heritage Memorial Fund for the £151 million scheme. Mr Hamlyn's donation, which

meets "a significant part" of the Centre's partnership funding target, is dependent on the project receiving a lottery award.

Under the plan, landscaping and new public spaces will make the most of the river setting and give a new look to a hostile, soulless concrete jungle with a maze of wind-swept walkways that attract graffiti artists and vandals.

The scheme is being designed by Richard Rogers and Allies and Morrison, creating one of the largest arts complexes in Europe — spanning

27 acres in which buildings constructed between 1951 and 1968 will be covered with a glass canopy.

An official announcement on the gift may be made by Downing Street where Mr Hamlyn, 71, is valued as one of the Labour Party's most generous benefactors.

Reports suggest that Mr Hamlyn, the son of Czech immigrants, boasts a £230 million fortune. It all began in the 1950s when, with £350 in his pocket, he started trading from a barrow in Camden market.



Hamlyn: started work from a barrow



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Walkers have new mountains to climb



Climbers on top of a Munro in the Torridon area, admiring the view. Anyone still tackling the 277 peaks over 3000 ft must now tackle an extra eight hills after the decision to increase the number

Shirley English finds that 'Munro baggers' face an uphill task

MUNRO baggers who thought it was safe to hang up their boots after climbing all 277 mountains over 3,000 feet in Scotland are being forced to think again.

The Scottish Mountaineering Club, which compiles tables of Munros, is about to add a further eight peaks to the official list later this year. For the hardy bunch of dedicated climbers determined to "bag" all the lofty peaks in their lifetime, it means their holy grail has now moved a little further out of reach.

The new edition of the tables, to be published in October/November, will also remove one old Munro from the list, now not thought worthy of the title.

Sgor an Iubhair in the Mamores is being demoted from a peak to a mere "top" because its ascent from surrounding peaks is now

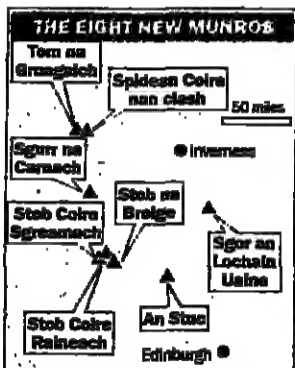
deemed too small. In total there will be 284 Munros instead of 277.

The changes have nothing to do with sudden alterations in the landscape, but are the result of a whim of the mountaineering club, which has decided to alter the way it classifies the peaks and tops, or "humps".

The 1,750 Munroists, who over the past 106 years have "bagged" all the Munros, will not be affected. They will be able to keep their Munro tie, if male, or brooch, if female. However those close to conquering all 277 will now have eight extra peaks to climb and if they have already bagged Sgor an Iubhair, they will have wasted their breath

— in effect, they will have gone up a mountain and come down a hill.

Yesterday Donald Bennett, publications manager for the Scottish Mountaineering Trust, said he hoped the alterations would be welcomed by climbers keen for a new challenge. But he admitted the list was largely subjective: "I would hope that most hill walkers and climbers will think it's great that they've got an excuse to get back out on the mountains." The move is meant to complete a process started 16 years ago when a number of tops were reclassified and promoted to Munros in their own right. Over the years the number of Munros has fluctuated. The first list of



The peaks were named after pioneer Sir Hugh Munro

238 peaks was compiled by Sir Hugh Munro in 1891, a Victorian businessman and founder of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, whose name



became the generic term for the highest peaks. By 1921 there were 276 Munros. This shrank and grew, reaching 279 in 1953, then dropping to

276 in 1981 when the last major changes took place. Metrifaction transformed Munros into peaks higher than 914.4 metres, a less magical figure. The number reached 277 in 1990 when the Ordnance Survey reassessed the height of a peak once thought too small.

Chris Smith, the Culture, Media and Sport Secretary and the only parliamentary Munroist, completed his final peak in May 1989, 24 years after climbing his first as a 13-year-old.

He said yesterday: "I will be examining the new peaks with interest to see if I have been over them. If not I will look forward to finding the time to get back out there

again." Other famous Munro-baggers included the late Labour leader John Smith, who took up walking for fitness after his heart attack in 1988. He had a map dotted with around 100 red pins, representing Munros conquered, at Westminster.

Cameron McNeish, mountain writer and broadcaster, said many would have to go over old ground to take in the new tops. "It all adds to the rather daft nature of Munro-bagging, but being cynical I can't help thinking that when the Munro Tables come round for reprint every five or six years it makes good commercial sense to come up with a newer list."

Sir Hugh Munro attempted

to climb all the peaks dressed in a kilt and Balmoral bonnet. He bagged all but two, the Inaccessible Pinnacle on Skye and Carn Clìoch-mhulinn in the Cairngorms, which he was keeping until last. He died of pneumonia in France in 1919, aged 63, before he could tackle them.

The eight new Munros are Stob Coire Raineach (on Buachaille Etive Beag ridge, Glencoe); Stob na Broige (Buachaille Etive Mor, Glencoe); Stob Coire Sgreamach (Bidean nam Bian, Glencoe); Spidean Coire nan clach (Beinn Eighe, Wester Ross); Tom na Gruagach (Beinn Alligin, Wester Ross); An Stuc (Ben Lawers group, Central Highlands); Sgurr na Carnach (Five Sisters of Kintail ridge); and Sgor an Lochain Uaine, or Angel's Peak (Braeriach to Cairn Toul ridge, Cairngorms).

Mayday as drink kills Russian

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A RUSSIAN sailor died and another had to be flown ashore in a Royal Navy helicopter yesterday after they drank large quantities of industrial alcohol on their ship.

The two men fell seriously ill as the merchant ship *MS Vladimir Vysotsky* sailed in the southern Caribbean, north of Venezuela. The Royal Navy ship *HMS Norfolk* responded to a mayday call in the early hours and a Lynx helicopter, with medical staff flew to the scene.

A spokesman for the Royal Navy said: "Unfortunately one of the men had already died by the time the helicopter arrived. The other man was winched onto the helicopter and flown to the sick bay of *HMS Norfolk*. He has now been transferred to a hospital in Aruba in the Dutch Antilles, where he is still seriously ill."

Alcohol is banned on the Russian ship and it appears that the two men turned to methanol, normally used as a solvent, in desperation. *HMS Norfolk* was en route from the Panama Canal to Tortola in the British Virgin Islands.

Boy died after doctor cut artery

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A TEENAGE boy died after an operation in which a surgeon accidentally cut one of his main arteries, an inquest has been told.

Mark Smith, who was studying for his GCSEs, was taken to hospital after suffering stomach pains and sickness just a month before sitting his exams. Doctors diagnosed a blockage in his small bowel and he was operated on at the East Surrey Hospital. During surgery Peter Bird, who was conducting the operation, mistakenly cut a main artery with a surgical lance.

The inquest at Chertsey, Surrey, heard how the teenager made a quick recovery and, in a matter of days, had returned to his home in Crawley, West Sussex. However, only a few days later he awoke his parents in the early hours suffering from extreme abdominal pains.

At Thursday's inquest his parents, Richard and Ann, related the two hours in which their son's condition deteriorated until he was pronounced dead in the accident and emergency unit on May 25 this

year. The inquest was told how repeated attempts to find Mark's medical notes were fruitless.

The hearing was told that Mark was taken for a series of tests but collapsed during some X-rays. His blood pressure fell and he went into cardiac arrest.

Dr Fasad Jinadu said that had he known of the surgical mishap Mark could have been operated on straight away in a bid to clamp his artery and stem the flow of blood. He was not told of the problem until after Mark's death.

Mr Bird, who originally operated on Mark, said he believed that Mark's fatal bleeding had begun on Sunday when he first experienced severe pains in his abdomen.

A post-mortem examination showed that the infected cut had begun bleeding — possibly for two days before Mark collapsed — and had then finally burst, leaving four pints of blood in the boy's abdomen. Recording a verdict of accidental death, Surrey Coroner Michael Burgess said that Mark's death had been caused due to haemorrhage.

Daughter gets life for stabbing

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A WOMAN was jailed for life yesterday for stabbing her 51-year-old mother to death on the day before Mothering Sunday.

Michelle Pearce, 28, from Corby, Northamptonshire, stabbed her mother, a divorcee, more than 30 times as she lay in bed on March 16 last year. The prosecution said her motive might never be known, although Pearce was in financial difficulties and stood to benefit by £50,000 from an insurance policy on her mother's life.

She denied murder, and claimed that her mother was seen alive after the time she was alleged to have been stabbed. After the verdict, the jury was told that she also faced a second murder charge over a former boyfriend, David Anderson, 28, in Corby in January 1990. He was found dead after a car he was sitting in caught fire in Corby. A coroner recorded a verdict of accidental death after an inquest seven years ago. Yesterday Mr Justice Eady recorded a formal verdict of not guilty on the case after the prosecution offered no evidence.

Wreck salvage team ordered to halt

AN OPERATION to salvage the wreck of an 18th-century packet ship lost off the north Cornish coast over 200 years ago was ordered to stop at midnight last night.

The order to protect the wreck of the *Hanover* was made by Tony Banks, the Culture, Media and Sport Minister, under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. On Thursday it emerged that 14 historic cannon have been brought out of the wreck, off Cligga Head, near Perranporth, by treasure hunters hoping to raise gold bullion worth up to £50 million.

Three of the two-ton cannon were raised from the sea onto a diving rig where they are wrapped in sacking to preserve them. The remainder are still under water near the rig. The team salvaging the wreck of the square-rigged



Martin spent ten years searching for wreck

from an offshore dive platform for the past three weeks. Pumps have been used to clear sand which had covered the vessel, which sank on route from Portugal to Falmouth. It was believed to be carrying gold coins then worth £60,000, but which would now worth millions.

The department said yesterday the order made it an offence to interfere with the wreck, or to carry out diving or salvage operations without a licence from the Secretary of State.

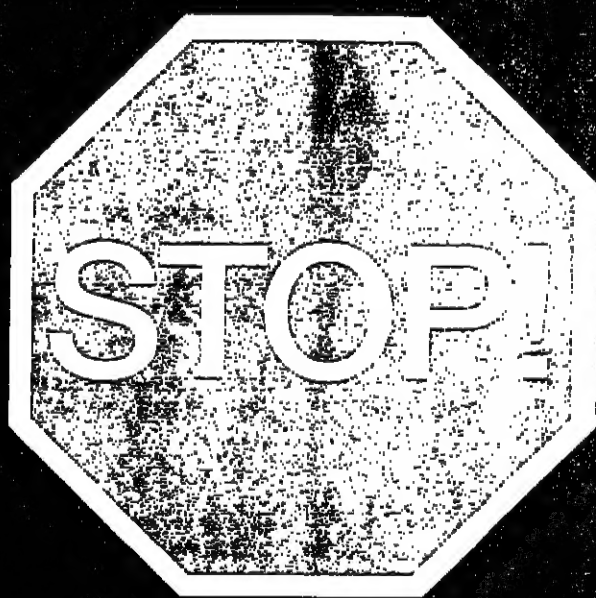
"The current operations have to stop," said a spokesman, who said the department's interest was the archaeological value of the site. Mr Martin would need to apply for a licence from the Secretary of State if he wanted to continue.

Although the department

had been monitoring the situation closely for some months, they had not known the precise location of the site, and diving had only recently started.

A spokesman for the Post Office, which tried unsuccessfully to have the site designated a protected wreck, said its experts did not believe there was any bullion at the site. The spokesman said: "Salvage continued for two years after the ship was wrecked, and it seems likely any treasure left on board would have been recovered." It was, though, concerned about artefacts.

The salvage firm said last night it was "considering its options with its advisers". The company was shocked at the department's decision. Its prime concern was the safety of the wreck.



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Dearing to reject Ivy League call

John O'Leary predicts proposals for intensified student recruitment

SIR RON DEARING will rule out the creation of an "Ivy League" of elite universities in his report on higher education next week. He will urge the Government to take the brakes off the recruitment of more students.

The report, to be published on Wednesday, will acknowledge concerns about the quality of some courses and recommend that research funding is concentrated on a limited number of centres of excellence. But Sir Ron's committee, which includes five vice-chancellors, has set its face against formal divisions of universities and will counsel against sudden changes in

the higher education system. Leading universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, have become increasingly dissatisfied with the allocation of state funding for higher education. There have been growing calls for a British equivalent of the elite group of universities in the United States.

Sir Ron is expected to recommend more selective distribution of research funds, but to argue that British universities do not lend themselves to simple categorisation. Centres of excellence outside the lead-

ing universities would be damaged by the creation of a "premier league" of research institutions.

Instead, the report will back continued diversity in the university system, with renewed expansion. The proportion of 18-year-olds going on to higher education has doubled in the past ten years, but there is a freeze on the recruitment of students.

Sir Ron will side with business leaders, who have called for the present 30 per cent of young people going into higher education to rise to at least

40 per cent. But he is expected to stipulate that many of the extra students should take shorter courses than the ubiquitous three-year degree.

He was impressed on a visit to Japan, where half of young people opt for expensive higher education, with the variety of courses and types of institution.

The committee's report will run to more than 1,000 pages and will take account of 6,000 pages of written evidence. The recommendations have been produced in 14 months, compared with more than two

years taken by the Robbins Committee, which produced the last major report on higher education in the 1960s.

Many of those submitting evidence expressed concern about the quality of some degree courses. The committee will conclude that British higher education is still well respected internationally, but faces decline without a fresh injection of funds. Science and engineering are the areas of greatest concern, while some overseas courses have fallen below acceptable standards. Tuition fees of more than

£1,000 are seen as the only realistic source of sufficient money to maintain quality. But Sir Ron is expected to make a special plea for Government action to help universities over their immediate funding problems. Vice-chancellors have estimated that they face a £3 billion shortfall by the end of the decade, and fees introduced for new students only in 1999 would not close the funding gap.

Sir Ron, conscious that he will be establishing a blueprint for the next century, is anxious not to damage long-term plans for higher education with a short-term solution to the universities' difficulties.

Schools to be denied reforms, claims Dorrell

BY JOHN O'LEARY

A GOVERNMENT blueprint will mean schools lose the freedom they need to improve, Stephen Dorrell, the Shadow Education and Employment Secretary, claimed yesterday.

In his first speech on education since taking up his new post, Mr Dorrell warned local authority leaders that the "heavy hand of Government" was about to descend on schools. Last week's White Paper would submerge schools in a tide of bureaucracy and central prescription, he said.

Speaking in Bristol at the Council of Local Education Authorities, Mr Dorrell welcomed the Government's "conversion" to Tory reforms. But he said the White Paper threatened the diversity of schools, which guaranteed parental choice.

Mr Dorrell listed a series of centralising measures, including "arbitrary restraint" on infant-class sizes, a ban on schools' use of interviews to assess applicants, and government prescription of teaching methods and homework. The Government's pledge to keep intervention to a minimum would be "honoured more in the breach than the observance", he said.

The new system of plans and targets threatened to overload teachers with administrative burdens, Mr Dorrell said. "The need to enhance the standing and professionalism of the individual teacher is a key priority facing the education service. But how is that objective conceivably served by a Government that seeks to tell teachers how to set homework?"

Mr Dorrell also said the Government had made no attempt to cost many of the proposals in the White Paper, and had left key policy details deliberately unclear.

Prize book about drugs may be filmed for schools

BY A STAFF REPORTER

THE prize-winning novel about a teenage girl who becomes a heroin addict after running away from her family may be filmed for schools television.

Exclusive film and television rights to *Junk*, a 1997 Carnegie Medal winner, have been secured by Zenith North, which made *The Famous Five* programmes.

Melvin Burgess's book tells the love story of two 14-year-olds as they spiral into heroin addiction and prostitution.

Accepting his prize on Wednesday this week, Burgess hit out at "frothing parents and fundamentalists" who tried to restrict the subject matter of children's literature. "These educational anoraks froth loud enough and long enough to get whole communities to do it their way," he said.

Zenith North, which also makes ITV's *Byker Grove*, has already received expressions of interest for *Junk* from BBC Schools Drama and Channel 4. Peter Murphy, director of children's and family programming for Zenith, said that it had acquired the rights to *Junk* some time before the Carnegie Prize announcement. "We had a shrewd idea it would win."

The company won critical acclaim for its adaptation for BBC Schools Drama of *Throwaways* by Ian Strachan, another uncompromising look at homeless youngsters. "Kids deserve a wide diet. It is how you present material — we did it with a lot of integrity and got a lot of positive reaction, and we will do this the same way," Mr Murphy said.

But whoever became involved in co-production, *Junk* would not be scheduled for traditional children's viewing, he said. *Junk* was likely to be shown in schools in a learning context, he added.



Linda Watson, left, and her daughter, Amanda London-Williams, who have been remanded in custody

Pair remanded over husband's killing

THE wife and stepdaughter of Richard Watson, a millionaire businessman, spent last night on remand in custody charged with his murder. The pair, who had sat tearfully in court, were refused bail after a three-hour hearing in front of Haywards Heath magistrates.

Friends and family of Linda Watson, 43, and her daughter Amanda London-Williams, 22, packed the court for the hearing. The two, now of Lingfield in Surrey, are alleged to have been concerned with an unknown third person in the shooting of Richard Watson, 55, a computer magnate, last December.

When Mrs Watson was asked if she understood the charge she replied: "I hear what you are saying but I don't understand the allegation."

Mr Watson was shot in the neck and chest on the driveway of his luxury farmhouse in East Grinstead, West Sussex, as he stepped from his sports car.

Mrs Watson, a former model, smiled and Miss London-Williams, a ballet teacher, blew a kiss as friends shouted "We love you" before the pair climbed into a police van. Inside the court Miss London-Williams wiped away tears and clasped a teddy bear as the charge

against her and her mother was read out. Her mother stared straight ahead for most of the hearing, occasionally inquiring if her daughter was all right.

When the pair were remanded in custody there was a gasp from people sitting in the public gallery.

After the hearing Linda's brother, Alexander Miller, 54, who runs a window-cleaning company in Christchurch, Dorset, said: "My sister had nothing to do with it. Both of them could not kill anyone. They could not hurt a fly. My faith in the police has gone. I have no confidence in them at all."

READER OFFER THE TIMES

Exclusive private view at the Tate



Readers of *The Times* are invited to an exclusive party, on Tuesday, July 22, to celebrate the Tate Gallery's 100th birthday.

The entire gallery will be open and works on show include special centenary displays, the Turner collection and the current exhibition of Ellsworth Kelly's works. The party is from 6.30pm-8.30pm.

You will be able to see a selection of 100 works of special interest, two rooms of Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite paintings and Henry Tate's Gift, which tells the fascinating story of the gallery's foundation, with a display of works from the original collection. Among these originals you will see the beautiful oil painting *The Lady of Shalott* (above) by artist John William Waterhouse.

The current major exhibition at the Tate focuses on the work of the leading American painter Ellsworth Kelly whose observations of the real world are transformed into abstract works of the greatest possible purity of colour, line and form.

To book your birthday invitation, call First Call on 0171-420 0000. Tickets, which cost £16.75 per person, include canapés and two glasses of wine.

100
The Tate Gallery's 100th Birthday

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THE TIMES SATURDAY JULY 19 1997

League call

Recruitment

Strong pound sends Britons flocking to sun

THE peak holiday season officially begins today with an estimated 300,000 package holidaymakers expected to fly out of Britain over the weekend. Almost as many independent travellers will head south both over and under the Channel.

A combination of a strong pound, building society windfalls and poor weather at home has produced an unprecedented race to get away as soon as the school term ends. Almost all package holidays for the next two months have been sold with Spain and the Balearic islands again the most popular choices.

Anyone who has yet to decide where to go this summer will find little left. Demand is such that one company, Airtravels, plans to impose a £20 surcharge per person on any holiday left unsold in August.

Steve Endicott, Airtravels sales and commercial director, said: "For the second year running our operators look certain to run out of peak season holidays and the message is book it or lose it."

An additional two million Britons will visit France this year. With the pound worth within a few centimes of ten francs and the centre of Paris three hours away by train, France has become the fashionable destination. Pascal Saint-Père, director of the

Holiday firms are celebrating big sales this summer, reports Harvey Elliott

French Government Tourist Office, said that there had already been an increase of at least 20 per cent in the number of British visitors, and many tour operators claimed twice as many customers as last year.

"We are back to the 1991 level," M. Saint-Père said. "This year we will see the return of the two million who stayed away when the franc was under eight to the pound. With prices stable the difference the strong pound has made in real spending power compared with last year is enormous."

Le Shuttle is competing hard for cross-Channel car traffic. It expects to have half the Dover to Calais market by the end of the year.

Gins are also back in favour after a slump in interest from the British. Brittany Ferries, which sells 1,300 gite holidays claims that sales are up by 71 per cent on last year. Xavier

Schouler, general manager of Brittany Ferries Holidays, said: "This success answers all the gloomy reports of last year that the gite was dead as a holiday concept."

Those heading to the South of France, however, are likely to find high winds and sudden storms while much of Spain will have rain, according to the London Weather Centre.

Garwick, Britain's biggest holiday airport, expects to see about 108,000 passengers pass through today and more than 112,000 on Sunday. "We're handling about 40,000 more than during the same weekend last year," a spokeswoman said.

At least 10 per cent of British Airways flights will still be disrupted because of the lingering effects of last week's cabin crew strike. Services should be back to normal by Monday.

In Britain, meanwhile it will be a dry and sunny weekend but the bad weather is forecast to return by Thursday. Many roadworks have been suspended to try to prevent the worst of the jams but the AA still predicted trouble.

"The first weekend of school summer holidays is always extremely busy" said a spokesman. The good news for those left behind at work was that at least the roads would be clearer with the school term ended.



A collection of junk: part of the prize-winning exhibit that was described by an admirer as "a celebration of the activity of people"

Artist cleans up with pile of junk



Takahashi: explanation is complicated, she said

IT LOOKS like the inside of some suburban garages. In fact, it is a work of art. The difference is that, while the person who leaves this kind of mess at home might risk being nagged to clean it up, the artist won a £5,000 prize.

Tomoko Takahashi, 31, went round an art college that is hosting Britain's largest annual exhibition of contemporary art, and piled two rooms with junk and scrap she found. She gave it the title: *The Painting Storage Department and Left Overs from the Painting Department*.

Her work, which took seven days, includes paint-splattered old desks, lockers, planks of wood, and hundreds of

cigarette butts. It won first prize against 36 other entrants in the EAST exhibition, part-funded by the Arts Council of England and the Henry Moore Foundation, at the Norwich School of Art and Design and the Sainsbury Centre at the University of East Anglia.

The Japanese artist said: "I wanted to amplify the fact that this was not a gallery, it was an art school. I wanted to show the things that are always taken away before an exhibition. I was interested in colour, and the furniture has something to do with colour abstraction."

"It is a bit complicated to explain. It

shows everybody's crap. I really wanted to show the presence of many people, although all the cigarette butts come from me," said the 20-a-day smoker, who lives in Islington, north London, and studied at Goldsmiths and the Slade.

One cigarette butt is glued one to the heel of an upturned old shoe. There are also stacks of plastic chairs, desks, old nails strewn on the floor, scraps of wallpaper in a cupboard, a broken ruler and paint pots.

Lynda Morris, the Norwich gallery's curator, said: "It is first and foremost about people. It is a celebration of the activity of people."

Lineker ad given crisp reprimand

By CAROL MUDGLEY
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

GARY LINEKER's new crisp advertisement was yesterday ruled too raunchy for daytime television.

The Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre said the 30-second film, which features the Spice Girls, was too suggestive and not suitable to be seen by children. "The commercial will now be screened only in the evenings. A ten-second expurgated version will be made for daytime viewers."

The centre, which vets commercials before they go on air, objected to the dialogue. Lineker is shown walking past the five Spice Girls in a nightclub. Each tries to tempt the former football star with phrases such as "Have you scored recently?"

That remark and Scary Spice Mel B's "Wanna play ball?" were considered to have overstepped the mark.

Continental soot spoils country air

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

DANGEROUS levels of tiny flecks of soot and dust linked to heart attacks and breathing difficulties are being blown to Britain from the Continent, scientists say. The discovery follows findings that country air is sometimes almost as polluted as city air.

The research indicates that pollution in cities by cracking down on diesel vehicles may have limited value unless action is taken by other European countries.

The findings, published in the journal *Atmospheric Environment*, have come from Stephen Dorling of the University of East Anglia in Norwich and Andrew King of IMC Consulting in Burton-on-Trent. The researchers looked at concentrations of particles measured at monitoring stations in cities and the countryside during two pollution incidents last year, between January 19 and February 4,

and between March 10 and 25. During the second incident, concentrations of particles in London were 61 microgrammes per cubic metre, but levels in rural Kent were almost as high at 52 microgrammes.

If the pollution had been caused by city sources, there should have been a much greater discrepancy between the city and countryside monitoring sites. The tests, funded by the Department of the Environment, found that the pollution coincided with "winds emanating from mainland Europe".

John Steadman of AEA Technology, which runs the National Environmental Technology Centre at the Culham Laboratories, found that during the March incident in 1996, rural monitoring sites in Essex and Nottinghamshire broke the health limit for between ten and 13 days. The breaches in city sites were between ten and 15 days.

Police fail to find missing boy, 9

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A SEARCH was continuing last night for a nine-year-old Aberdeen boy missing since Thursday lunchtime. Scott Simpson, of Powis Circle, Aberdeen, was last seen at shops near his home. Earlier he had been seen near a playing field chatting to a "weird man".

He had left home at lunchtime to play with friends. When he had not returned by 9.45pm his parents started searching for him before calling police. More than 70 police officers and Aberdeen mountain rescue team joined local volunteers to comb parks and waste ground in the area and conduct house-to-house inquiries yesterday. Police divers were searching the River Don not far from his home last night.

Maureen Brown, Grampian Police inspector, said Scott had been sighted alone near local shops three hours after he had been seen speaking to a man in the park where he had been playing football. "We are concerned for him because he is aged 9. He might turn up. It is possible that he might have crept in somewhere to sleep," she said.

Police said the search would continue until dark and resume at first light if Scott had still not returned home. Scott's parents, Patsy, 32 and Dennis, 36, were last night desperately waiting to hear from him. But Mrs Simpson added: "He is a happy little boy and very sensitive. He would be very friendly to strangers and I am worried he might have gone away with someone."

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THE SUNDAY TIMES
tomorrow

Blair stakes his authority on Welsh plebiscite

THE people of Wales were treated to a double act yesterday. Tony Blair had come to the Principality to stake his authority on the campaign for a Welsh assembly. But it was also an occasion for Mr Blair and Ron Davies, the Welsh Secretary, to put on a united front and enthuse the Welsh nation that an assembly would give them "a strong voice".

The venue was straight from central casting — Mr Davies's home ground in his South Wales constituency of Caerphilly. In the summer of 1945 Charles I had come to the house to drum up support for the royalist cause.

The irony of the situation was not lost on the Prime Minister, who joked with an audience of more than 200, saying: "We all know what happened to Charles I."

There were, however, no walk-on roles for the die-hards in the Welsh Labour

Labour anxious that plan for assembly may be rejected by voters, reports Valerie Elliott

Party who have declared their scepticism to devolution. Mr Blair's whistle-stop tour to Newport, Caerphilly and Cardiff also avoided confrontation with the "devosceptics". Instead, Mr Blair mounted a robust defence of a Welsh assembly, and urged the people to "vote yes" in the referendum on September 18.

It was clear that some people would have preferred Mr Blair's visit after the plans

had been published in a White Paper next Tuesday. But the Prime Minister looks set to return a number of times to Wales to lead the campaign.

Yesterday, he set out a vision that an assembly would bring Government closer to the people and rid Wales of its present government-by-quango — there are about 130 such bodies. "The days of big government are over. The whole way the world is going is to greater decentralisation. If I was in Wales, I would vote for it. Wales has £7 billion cash every year, and the people will have a say on how it is spent."

Mr Blair also suggested that an assembly would allow people influence over areas that at present were not the responsibility of the Welsh Office, such as law and order. However, the visit from Mr Blair demonstrated the nervousness in the Government that the Welsh people might repeat the vote of 1979 and



Tony Blair at the Llancaiach Fawr heritage centre yesterday, where he held a questions-and-answers forum

reject devolution. Their fears have been prompted also by apparent apathy — a poll for the *Western Mail* in Cardiff showed that 44 per cent were still undecided. There was also concern that there would be a low turn-out in the referendum while ministers are anxious to ensure convincing endorsement.

A handful of Welsh Labour MPs have also indicated some anxiety. Lew Smith, MP for

Blaenau Gwent, is a keen constitutionalist, and has long been an opponent of devolution. Others, while not wholly hostile, are devo-sceptic. Denzil Davies, Llanelli; Edward Rowlands, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney; and Sir Raymond Powell, Ogmore, are opposed to the use of proportional representation in elections to the assembly. While Alan Rodgers, MP for Rhondda, believes that local

government could be undermined by an assembly.

Their concerns have also been fuelled by recent disclosures that Wales's quango state may not be fully dismantled. It seems there are a number of bodies set up by royal charter that would prove difficult to unwind.

It was clear, however, from the jubilant reception for Mr Blair yesterday that the people of Wales want their

share of attention from the new government.

An official launch for the "vote no" campaign yesterday attracted just three people. Robert Hodge, 42, a Cardiff businessman, and son of financier and Jersey tax exile, Sir Julian Hodge, has agreed to act as figurehead for the campaign. His father has pledged financial support.

Ted Rowlands, page 20

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Redwood renews call for minister to resign

By PHILIP WEBSTER
POLITICAL EDITOR



Lord Simon: has £2m shareholding in BP

THE Tory leadership last night renewed its call for Lord Simon of Highbury, the former chairman of BP, to resign from the Government after claiming that as minister responsible for the single market he is handling issues that affect the company, in which he has a £2 million shareholding.

John Redwood, the Shadow Trade and Industry Secretary, wrote to Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, asking him to investigate the alleged conflict of interest between Lord Simon's role and the single market "action plan" that contains many items of relevance to BP.

He focused on the establishment of a common European Union energy tax, and pointed out that natural gas would be excluded from it. BP was a large producer of natural gas and he could not see how Lord Simon could be involved in discussions about the matter, Mr Redwood said.

Other matters covered by the plan included the liberalisation of the gas market, the elimination of distortion in the taxation of capital income, and rules to alleviate the burden of compliance with anti-trust rules.

Sir Robin has already ruled that there is no conflict of interest in Lord Simon retain-

ing his shares. But Mr Redwood, backed by William Hague, is determined to continue the campaign against the Minister for European Trade and Competitiveness, who was first attacked for not declaring his holding in the Lords' Register of Interests.

Mr Redwood last night said he could not see how a substantial shareholder in BP could represent the UK in the single-market negotiations.

Matters came up in formal and informal meetings and so many items presented an actual or apparent conflict of interest for him as a BP shareholder. He asked what benefit BP would obtain from the proposed tax changes to energy and capital income.

Labour hit back last night, saying that Mr Redwood's attack confirmed the Tories were anti-business. "Lord Simon is a businessman of international standing. After the election he could have continued his career, with his huge earning capacity, but instead has chosen to give up his earnings and serve the British people at no cost to them," Ian McCartney, the Trade and Industry Minister, said.

Polling time-sheets upset Tory hopefuls

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

POTENTIAL Tory candidates are protesting at having to fill out time sheets to show they have spent at least six hours campaigning in the Uxbridge by-election.

More than 100 would-be parliamentary candidates have been sent the forms, which they have been told to return to Conservative Central Office if they help in Uxbridge.

Yesterday William Hague, the Tory leader, was forced to defend the exercise, seen by some as an attempt to emulate Tony Blair's control of the Labour Party. John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, challenged Mr Hague over his "bully-boy tactics". Mr

Hague said on a visit to Uxbridge that there was nothing new about the procedure, which had been used in one or two by-elections to encourage candidates to help.

Mr Hague denied that would-be candidates would be rejected if they did not go to Uxbridge, but he conceded that the information would be kept on record. "We need to know of course who supported us in a particular campaign. There is nothing new about that."

The Uxbridge by-election, to be held on July 31, was caused by the death of the sitting MP, Michael Shersby, who won the seat by a majority of 724 votes in May.

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Woman faces jail threat for feeding birds



Barbara Simpson

A PENSIONER who attracts thousands of birds to her home by smothering her garden with food was warned yesterday that she could go to prison.

A council had become so exasperated with Barbara Simpson it had asked a judge to jail her for breaking an injunction forbidding her from feeding the birds at her home in the village of Preston, near Weymouth, Dorset.

Mrs Simpson, 60, agreed yesterday at Winchester Crown Court not to put out

Neighbours protest at noise and nuisance as rooks, pigeons and starlings descend on homes

any bird seed, nuts, cheese or other scraps on her lawns or surrounding pavement until her case is heard. But Mr Justice Kennedy allowed Mrs Simpson to continue feeding her 30 doves from a bird table — despite being told the table measured 24 sq ft.

Neighbours had complained that Mrs Simpson spent £100 a week on assorted food for the birds. Rooks, pigeons and starlings perched

on neighbouring houses throughout the day, causing noise and nuisance, waiting for Mrs Simpson to feed them. Environmental health officers claimed the food was sometimes strewn bin deep.

Mrs Simpson, who is married to Robert, a retired newsagent, told the judge that she had not been present when the injunction was granted in December last year. Trevor Ward, representing Wey-

mouth and Portland Borough Council, said Mrs Simpson's previous solicitor asked to be released from the case a month ago.

Mr Justice Kennedy said he did not think it right to proceed with an application to commit someone to prison who was not represented.

He said he would adjourn the case but only on condition that Mrs Simpson gave an undertaking not to feed the

birds in the same terms as the injunction.

He told Mrs Simpson the birds could manage without her: "They will be able to find enough in July and August without any help from you."

Outside the court Mrs Simpson said: "The birds are my children and I would be prepared to go to prison if they stopped me feeding them."

She began feeding the birds 15 years ago, when a sick baby

blackbird landed on her doorstep. Since then she has begun emptying bags of cheese and nuts on to her front lawn and the path each day.

Vera Marshall, a neighbour in the seaside village, said: "It's been terrible. It smells like a chicken run and when we complain she just tells us not to be unkind. It begins at 5am when all the rooks start cawing away and waking us up. Then we get hundreds of

other birds sitting on our roofs waiting for her to come out. How would you like 200 pigeons sitting on your roof? We've got rats in the area now."

"I've lived here for seven years and she's been doing this ever since I arrived. We all go outside and try and clap the birds away which works temporarily but then they're back after two minutes."

"The council have tried to clear up the mess but as soon as they leave she comes out and pours more food out."

Young robbers are jailed for steaming spree

By LIN JENKINS

A ROBBERY spree by a "steaming" gang that included two schoolboys ended in jail yesterday. Police believe they were responsible for a string of robberies on building societies across southern England.

They were sentenced yesterday for a raid on the Alliance and Leicester in Salisbury. Having reconnoitred their target, one acted as look-out, another stayed in the car while two pulled scarves across their faces, ran into the shop, leapt over the counter without stopping and rifled the tills, taking £3,913 before running off and escaping in the hired red Escort XR3i.

As they returned from the robbery in May last year they attacked a London mini-cab driver when frustrated at being unable to pass his car in a narrow road in Fulham. They hit him with bottles and a chair. The victim spent five days in hospital and required 15 stitches to head wounds.

Two weeks earlier, two of the gang, Jerome Bailey, now 15, and Dennis Rose, 21, took part in a similar attack on the Abbey National in Andover, Hampshire. Again they burst in, at speed, their faces obscured, leapt over the counter and emptied three tills of £6,140 before the staff could activate their counter protection shields, lock the doors or summon help.

Bailey, of Clapham, south London, admitted the robbery

and was given five years' youth detention for the Andover raid and six years for the Salisbury raid to run concurrently. He was given a further 18 months to run consecutively for the assault occasioning grievous bodily harm on the mini-cab driver.

Rose, also of Clapham, received three years and four years respectively, and 18 months to run consecutively for the assault. David Robinson, 22, and Adrian Martin, 19, both of Clapham, were jailed for six years for the Salisbury robbery and given a further nine months to run consecutively after pleading guilty to affray in connection with the attack on the mini-cab driver, on Ahmed Wabert.



Simon Lupini, the Proms co-ordinator, gaining inspiration yesterday from a bust of Sir Henry Wood, founder of the Promenade Concerts

Biggest Proms opens with first night sell-out

THE biggest BBC Proms concert season opened last night with a traditional sell-out performance (Damian Whitworth writes). Hundreds of singers and players were as tightly packed into the Albert Hall as the promenaders for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, by Bernard Haitink.

The 103rd season of Henry Wood Proms will stage 73 concerts — one more than last year. Alongside classical performances the music of John

Lennon, Paul McCartney and Frank Zappa will be heard.

The King's Singers will premiere the new arrangements of *Penny Lane*, *Eleanor Rigby*, *I'll Follow the Sun* and *Honey Pie* on July 31 at a late-night concert. Excerpts from Zappa's *The Yellow Shark* can be heard tomorrow.

Brahms, who died 100 years ago, is one of three composers whose anniversaries will be marked. The others

are Schubert, who was born in 1797, and Mendelssohn, who died in 1847.

Leonora Thomson, spokeswoman for the Proms, said: "As is usual, seating for the first night was a sell-out, but sales are healthy for the whole series. Twenty per cent of the concerts have no seat tickets left, including the last night, but it is always possible to turn up and prom on the night."

The Proms and the Victoria and Albert Museum have joined forces to

present this year's Proms Chamber Music, to be held every Monday lunchtime at the museum. Nicholas Kenyon, the Proms director, said: "I hope there is a musical diet of extraordinary richness and variety."

A 70th birthday celebration concert will be held for John Dankworth and Cleo Laine, the first couple of jazz, and there will be a premiere of the new Dankworth piece. The Proms runs until Saturday, September 13.

Murder police get extra time with suspect

By JOANNA BALE

DETECTIVES hunting the killer of Lin and Megan Russell were yesterday granted an extra 36 hours to question a man arrested in connection with the murders.

The unnamed suspect, in his 30s, was held in the Medway area of Kent on Thursday and taken to Chatham police station for questioning. Detectives were granted a 12-hour extension by a police superintendent yesterday morning, then a further 24 hours by a magistrate. Police were last night expected to apply for a further 36 hours. After a second extension of 24 hours, they must charge or release him.

The arrest follows an appeal last week on BBC1's *Crimewatch UK* on the first anniversary of the murders. It prompted more than 1,000 calls from the public and the man held was one of several new names put forward.

Police have asked him to provide a sample of blood and hair for a DNA examination. Detectives have a tiny hair, believed to be the killer's, found at the murder scene. Officers have also been searching the man's home.

Mrs Russell, 45, and her daughter Megan, 6, were murdered as they walked along a quiet bridalway at Goodnestone near Canterbury by a man wielding a hammer. Mrs Russell's daughter Josie, now 10, survived the attack.



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Chipmunks complete trip around the world

By MARK HENDERSON

THREE RAF pilots yesterday completed their flight around the world in two Chipmunk training aircraft.

Squadron leaders Tony Cowan, 51, Ced Hughes, 63, and Bill Purchase, 60, landed at RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire, having taken off from London City airport on May 20. Their 14,000-mile journey included a 5,000-mile flight across Russia never before completed by a foreign pilot.

The two Chipmunks and their pilots, who flew the piston-engined planes on a rota basis, will be at the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford today. Squadron Leader Purchase said the three pilots were delighted to have made it home in time for the Fairford show. "We are thrilled to be here, and tired but excited after the expedition," he said last night. "We hope people will realise the extent of our achievement when they see the tiny size of the Chipmunks and realise quite how far we've been in them."

Exercise Northern Venture took place at the invitation of the Russian air force and has plotted an air route across Russia for commercial and private aircraft. The RAF pilots were joined for the Russian leg of the trip by Major Yuri Vostokov, who flew in the Chipmunk's Islander support plane and negotiated tricky landings at remote Siberian airfields.

"Yuri was a fantastic asset, without whom we could never have flown across Russia," Squadron Leader Purchase said. "Russia is not an easy place to fly, especially without local knowledge, and he made it possible. He was a military man and his attitude made it very easy for us to get along and work well together."

Major Vostokov guided the Chipmunks to a safe landing on an open field at one stop when the main airfield

was flooded and negotiated difficult weather conditions and hazardous mountain landings. A similar flight across Siberia planned last year had to be abandoned because of forest fires east of the Urals.

The Chipmunks were diverted by bad weather in Alaska and made several unscheduled stops in the Rockies because of difficult flying conditions. "We were disappointed to lose so much time on the North American leg of the trip," Squadron Leader Purchase said.

"The conditions were terrible, and we had to put down at mountain airfields rather more than we had hoped. We had hoped to get to Fairford ten days ago."

The expedition was met by a convoy of Chipmunk owners and factory workers in Toronto, where the aircraft were built by de Havilland. Squadron Leader Purchase said: "Virtually the whole factory turned out to meet us in Toronto, which was a fantastic feeling. The place is really the home of the Chipmunk, and they brought out old Tiger Moths and Harvards to welcome the planes home."

The Chipmunks were displayed in the Rockliffe Museum in Ottawa when the pilots stopped off there.

The two-seater planes, which can fly on four-star petrol, were fitted with auxiliary tanks and global-positioning navigation systems. The team had to replace 50 spark plugs, two generators, a propeller, a wheel and a brake system during the expedition.

The Chipmunk served as a training aircraft for the armed forces for 30 years before it was taken out of service in March. The Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales and Prince Andrew all learnt to fly in the plane, which has been replaced by the Bulldog and the Slingsby Firefly.



Squadron leaders Hughes, Cowan and Purchase

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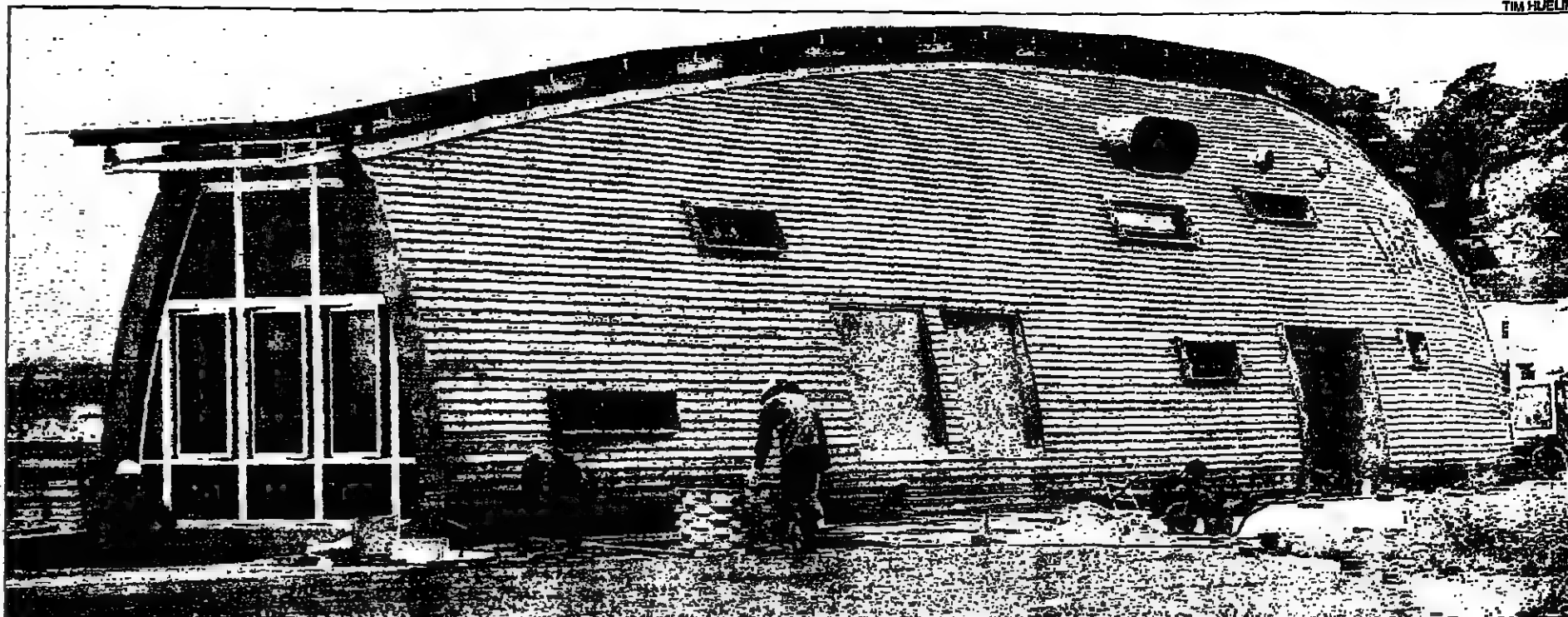
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By MARCUS BINNEY

Café rides tide of controversy

JERSEY'S new waterfront café has been called a navigational hazard, compared to a beached whale and a pregnant armadillo, and dubbed a monstrosity by a local newspaper. So when others likened it to an upturned hull, the promoters asked Tony Bullimore, the sailor with an inside view on the subject, to open the café today.

The architect, Will Alsop,

relishes the nicknames for his buildings. His Cardiff Bay visitors' centre, known as The Jam Roly-Poly, attracted two million visitors. In Jersey, Alsop says his design began as a fish, with clusters of tables outside to look like a swarm of minnows.

Mr Alsop said: "When complaints about the 'ship-

wrecked hull' started, we did some research which showed that in the last century the site was a boat-building yard. I like to say this is the 763rd boat built on the site." That will please Mr Bullimore, who spent four days in his capsized yacht during January's round-the-world race.

Like all the best expression-

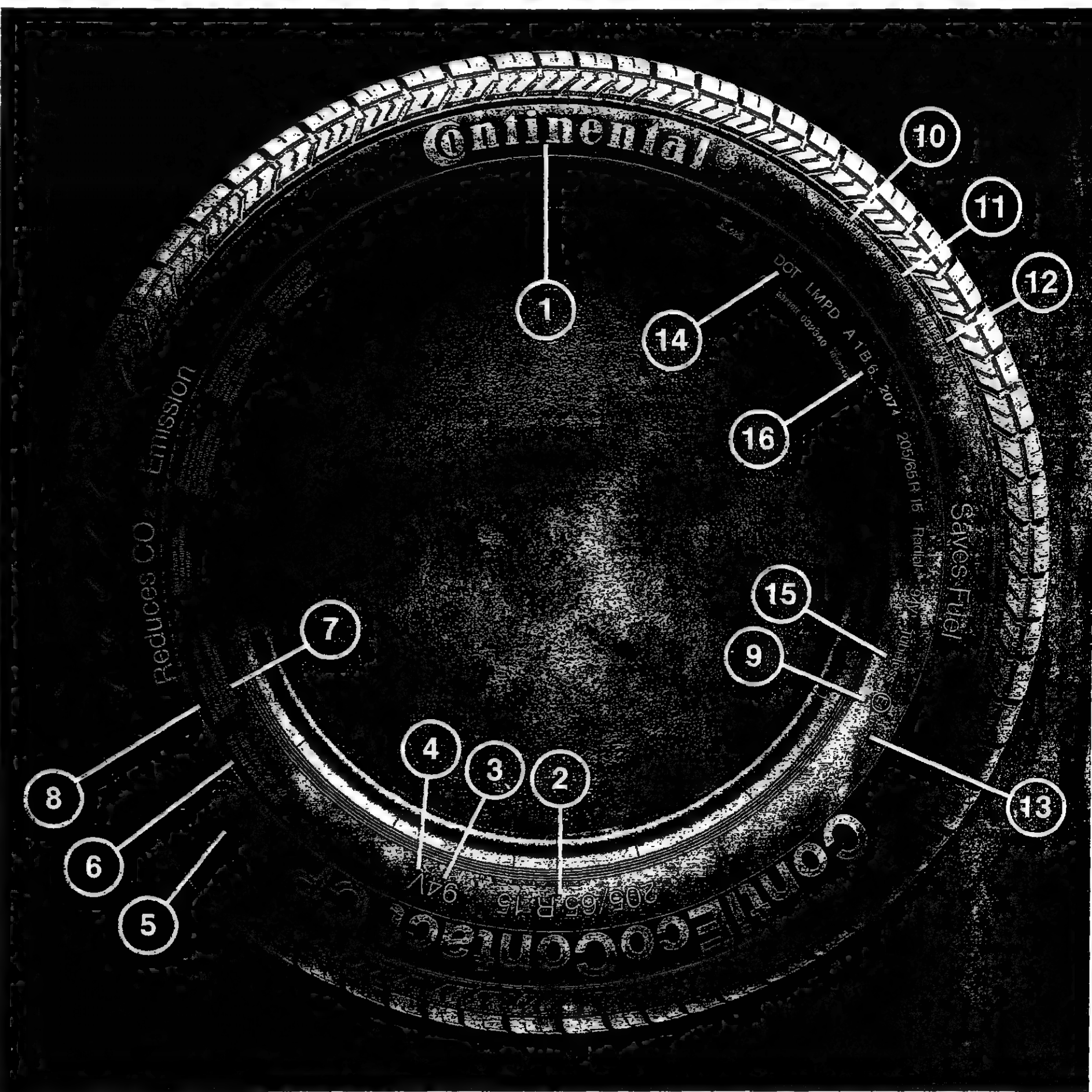
ist and sculptural architecture, the café, La Frégate, looks dramatically different as you move around it. End-on it may look like the back of a Hercules transporter, but the sides swell out as strongly as those of an 18th-century man o'war.

The structure stands in its own miniature dry dock, its

150 tonnes supported on 24 stout concrete columns. The hull is clad, clinker style, in short strips of Canadian cedar which sea breezes are expected to turn quickly to silver.

Entrance is across a series of short bridges, the lower part of each descending to form the walkway and the upper rising to become a canopy.

To admit light, Mr Alsop has split his hull down the centre and introduced a glass top.



ONE DAY YOU MAY MEET A GERMAN TYRE ENGINEER AT A PARTY. BE PREPARED.

A German tyre engineer's usual talk tends to be very well informed.

For example, if you asked your uncle the following about the four points of tyre design - he'd tell you: 1. The tread pattern, 2. The sidewall, 3. The internal structure, 4. The rubber compound.

So, if you meet one of a party, the only way to avoid looking out from your right hand to know about tyre technology is to have all the necessary knowledge at your fingertips. So you can give a good account of it.

1. Manufacturer's code. When choosing a tyre, always look for the Continental logo.

2. Tyre size. 205 - width in mm. 65 - ratio of height to width (in this case, 65% of 205mm). R - radial. 15 - rim diameter in inches.

3. A code representing the maximum load carrying capacity. In this case, 94 represents 670kg.

4. Speed rating. For cars, this ranges from 'S' to 'Z' - the higher the letter, the greater the speed capability. 'Z' means this tyre is capable of sustained speeds up to 180km/h. Please just take our word for it.

5. Coefficient of Rolling Resistance. This is the rolling resistance of the tyre expressed as a percentage of wheel load. In plain English, the lower the rolling resistance of the tyre, the lower your fuel consumption. A figure of

1.0 or less is every tyre engineer's aim.

6. USA law requires the maximum load rating per wheel to be shown.

7. More construction details - music to a Continental tyre engineer's ears. Under the tread of this tyre, there are 5 plies (belts): 1 rayon, 2 steel, 2 nylon.

8. The maximum inflation pressure. USA law requires this to be shown.

9. E - tyre complies with nominal values to ECE standard R80 (A Good Thing!).

10/11/12. Manufacturer's guarantee that the tyre meets 'USA' requirements for tread life expectancy, braking performance, and temperature stability at higher speeds.

13. Approval number to ECE standard R80 for this tyre. (See: we told you it was a good thing.)

14. The Department of Transportation oversees tyre safety standards in the USA. (Or 'tire' safety as they call it.)

15. Tyre construction type. This tyre, like all modern tyres, is tubeless.

16. Manufacturer's code for tyre factory, size, type and week and year of manufacture. Our engineers would like to autograph all their work, but we have to draw the line somewhere.

Memorise all this fascinating information, and you'll be able to swap tyre anecdotes all evening. You'll also be able to make a well-informed decision next time you have to choose a new tyre.

And if you ever go to a fancy dress party, you'll be perfect as a German tyre engineer.

Continental

Germans put on alert for flood exodus

POLAND held a national day of mourning yesterday for 48 known flood victims, while German authorities stood by for mass evacuations in the eastern state of Brandenburg where flood waters have already crept past the highest levels this century.

Around Frankfurt an der Oder, water levels were rising at the rate of two inches an hour early yesterday, but slowed later. Two small villages nearby were evacuated.

Meteorologists said that heavy downpours over Brandenburg, Poland and the Czech Republic, forecast for last night and today, would cause water levels to rise again, but they could not predict when. More than 35,000 police officers, firefighters and German troops were standing by to assist in case of mass evacuations, and border police were ready to drop 1.6 million sandbags from helicopters over the banks of the Oder.

The closure of hundreds of bridges and crossings along a 100-mile stretch of the border with Poland was announced by the Brandenburg Interior Ministry. Motorists were warned to avoid driving to eastern Brandenburg unless absolutely necessary and the 6,000 lorries and 40,000 cars that drive over the Polish-German borders daily were being diverted to crossings further south in Bavaria.

In Poland, while the nation

As Poland mourns its victims of two weeks' torrential rain, homelessness is beckoning for thousands across the border, Deborah Collett reports

mourned, President Kwasniewski rushed through emergency legislation, designed to help victims of flooding that has devastated the south of the country. His Government has been criticised for doing too little too late by the opposition, which said a state of emergency should have been declared in the worst-hit areas.

Polish television and radio stations replaced scheduled programmes with information bulletins, and flags flew at half mast. Around 16,000 troops were mobilised to reinforce flood barriers in the south as the country braced itself for another lashing of rain. Thousands of people were put on alert to evacuate their homes.

Since torrential rains began two weeks ago, about 450,000 acres of land have been flooded and more than 132,000 homes evacuated. Each family hit by flooding will receive about £525 under a finance law amended in the Polish parliament on Thursday.

In the Czech Republic, flood tides have left 46 people dead in the country's worst natural calamity this century. The worst flooding caused scores

of road and rail links to be cut and hundreds of businesses were forced to close.

Farms and houses have been destroyed and the total damage is estimated to range from £368 million to £1.73 billion.

The Government, already hit by a huge trade deficit which forced budget cuts to slow demand and defend the weakened crown, earmarked about £190 million for flood relief.

River authorities emptied dams on the Vltava, which flows through Prague, and elsewhere to make way for the next downpour.

Up to 4in of rain were expected to fall in the mountain in the next 24 hours, the Czech Weather Service said. Flood teams were repairing breached defences in expectation of a fresh onslaught.

Cloudbursts from the same general low-pressure system that has battered Poland and the Czech Republic also wreaked havoc in Austria, putting wide areas of the country on flood alert as swollen rivers rose to breach their banks.

Manfred Bauer, a meteorologist, predicted a catastrophe if downpours kept up in the regions of Lower Austria, Styria, Salzburg and Upper Austria this weekend.

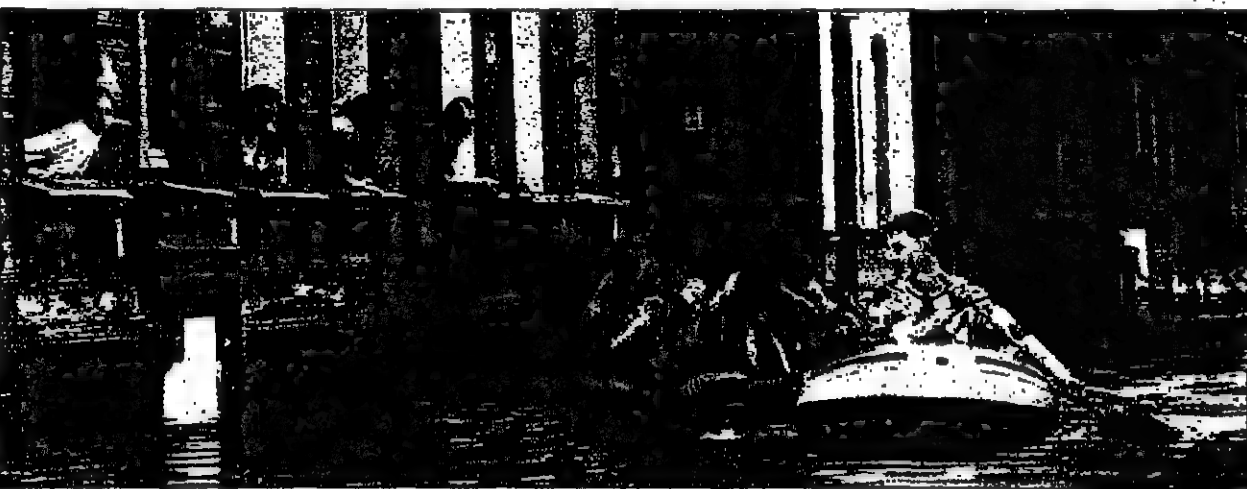
In the northern province of Upper Austria, waters from the Trautnitz river washed over a campsite near Grieskirchen where 24 teenagers were rescued by firefighters, the radio reported.

Last week the country suffered its worst flooding this century, with water levels reaching the roofs of houses in the Lower Austrian plains around Vienna.

Leading article, page 21
Weather reports, page 24



Flooding in Eisenhüttenstadt, Brandenburg, above, and shoulder-deep waters in Wrocław, Poland, below



South of France resorts braced for gales

BY NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT
CORRESPONDENT

TOURISTS in the South of France were warned to take care over the weekend as forecasters predicted gale-force and squally winds that are likely to bring misery to the Côte d'Azur.

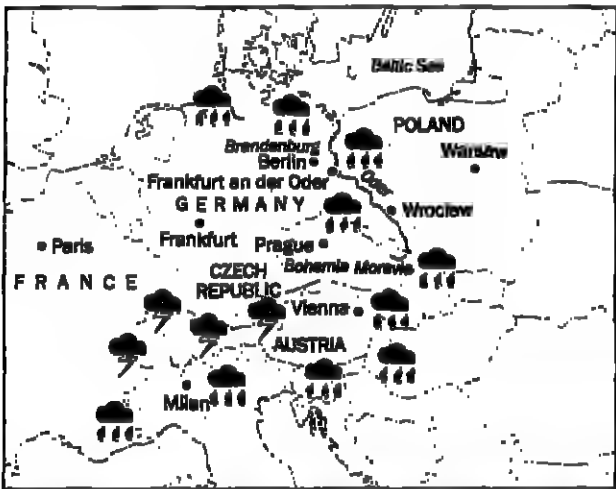
The meeting of high pressure over Western Europe and Britain and low pressure over Central Europe is funneling strong Mistral winds down through Poland, Germany and eastern France to the south.

Dave Cox, of the Meteorological Office's international forecasting section, said wind speeds in Marseilles were already exceeding 35 knots. "The winds will get stronger over the next day or so... and will be gusting a lot more than 40 knots," he said. "If you are on the beach you will be sand-blasted, in a tent blown away and in a small boat it will be unpleasant and very dangerous... a nasty wind."

Ivan Obrusnik, director of the Hydro-Meteorological Institute in Prague, said that flooding in parts of the Czech Republic was worse than the great floods of 1903.

"The ones we are having now are bigger and lasting longer... it is a catastrophe," Dr Obrusnik said. Some mountain regions had seen up to 600mm of rain in five days: the normal average for the time of year would have been up to 25mm. Dr Obrusnik said 600mm was the equivalent to a third of normal annual rainfall.

Computer models of global warming indicate that parts of Europe may see more violent downpours as pollution and rising temperatures alter weather systems. Dieter Kraemer, director of hydrology, and water resources at the World Meteorological Organisation in Geneva, said: "In Switzerland we have had extreme rainfall for a couple of weeks." The London Weather Centre said that Britain was unlikely to suffer any ill-effects from the bad weather in Central Europe.



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Versace's mourners screened in manhunt

FROM TOM RHODES IN SOUTH BEACH, MIAMI

HUNDREDS of mourners were screened by undercover agents at a Miami Beach memorial for Gianni Versace yesterday as police said the "cocky" alleged killer may have returned to revel in the scene of his crime.

Convinced that Andrew Cunanan, 27, the gay gigolo and chief suspect in the Versace murder, might make another unexpected appearance at his memorial, officers walked up and down the aisles of St Patrick's Catholic Church throughout the ceremony. They inspected the faces of every male dignitary, businessman, model and fashion industry consultant and scanned the crowds listening to the ceremony by loudspeaker outside.

The service, held at the neo-Renaissance building once frequented by Al Capone, the Chicago gangster, was a final mark of respect from the South Beach community for the man who had helped to create an American Riviera and inspired a vibrant international hotspot in this once dilapidated Deco District of Miami.

Many mourners wore Versace black, his characteristic cloth, as a symbolic tribute. Outside the church, police officers handed out pictures of Cunanan as local authorities continued to investigate tips and leads, including possible links between the alleged serial killer and the most recent murder of a Cuban-born doctor in Miami Springs.

Police sniffer dogs had recognised the scent they picked up on clothes apparently left by the suspect near Versace's beachfront mansion as the same smell discovered on the passenger seat of a black BMW owned by Silvio Alfonso, the dead doctor.

In an apparent volte-face yesterday, officials denied earlier reports that they had ruled out any connection between the two murders and said the inquiry was still continuing. Alfonso, 44, described as a known homosexual, had been trussed with designer ties and strangled with a braided belt in the bedroom of his bungalow. He was lying face down with underwear and trousers around his ankles.

Federal and local authorities have widened their net to investigate the murders of other homosexual men along the East Coast since April and are also analysing another death on South Beach in May, days after Cunanan is said to have killed a previous victim in New Jersey. They remain convinced that Cunanan, a master of disguise, may be feeding his ego by remaining in South Florida to watch continuous media coverage of the nationwide manhunt.

John Coffey, of the Florida Law Enforcement Department, said his men were scanning television pictures of crowds near the bloody steps of the palazzo on Ocean Drive shortly after Versace was killed by two bullets in the back of the head.

"We don't know if he did return to the scene after the killing," said Mr Coffey, "but people that know the subject tell us that it would not be abnormal for him to do that. He is quite a cocky guy."

Miami police said Cunanan had made several mistakes since he allegedly shot Versace last Tuesday morning. They have now established that the shots that killed three of Cunanan's alleged victims were all fired by the same weapon, a .40 calibre pistol. Versace was killed by a similar weapon but investigators have not yet linked the bullets or shell casings from the specific handgun to his murder.

Letters, page 21



Santo Versace carries his brother's ashes, accompanied by their sister, Donatella, in Moltrasio yesterday

Designers accused of sham as family grieves

FROM JOHN PHILLIPS IN ROME

THE ashes of designer Gianni Versace were returned to Italy yesterday and buried at a private ceremony on the shore of Lake Como where he had a villa.

But the ceremony was overshadowed by controversy in the fashion world over whether Versace's colleagues really mourned his death.

At a simple family service attended by a dozen mourners, the urn containing the designer's ashes was buried in the village of

Moltrasio. Earlier it arrived by air near the northern city of Bergamo, accompanied by Versace's sister, Donatella, and their brother, Santo, on a private jet from Miami.

"May the Lord help us to understand what has befallen you," Father Bartolomeo Franzl, the parish priest, told mourners gathered at a small chapel in the cemetery.

Four limousines were parked at the wrought-iron gates as Donatella, wearing a close-fitting black dress and sunglasses, led her children, Allegra and Daziel, past

security guards, two paramilitary carabinieri and a few bystanders. Celestino Villa, the Mayor, said that a special chapel would be built as a permanent resting place for Versace's ashes and that a Mass would be celebrated in his memory in Milan cathedral on Tuesday.

"The urn will remain here with us on Lake Como. These were his wishes," Signor Villa said. He denied reports that Versace had already built a chapel inside the villa to be used after his death.

In Milan, the office of the Archbishop said it was deciding

where to hold the Mass. Church sources said that the cathedral was the most likely location.

Shopkeepers in Moltrasio lowered their shutters yesterday. "This is due recognition for a great person who put the image of Italy in the window attracting the lights of world attention," said Luciano Tessaro, chairman of the Italian Association of Window Dressers.

However, a leading fashion writer started a furious controversy yesterday by accusing Versace's fellow designers of shedding crocodile tears for him. Adriana

Mulasano, in a letter to the Rome daily *La Repubblica*, accused Italy's fashion moguls of "intellectual poverty... a lack of culture and values", and said the designers had contrived "the most degrading spectacle that the world of fashion could give of itself". She said Italian designers had "jumped on the victory chariot so that each of them could take two minutes of glory". Mulasano added that the solidarity apparently shown in expressions of sadness by the top designers was false. "The stylists do not love each other," she said.

Fifth Avenue finds solace in buying frenzy

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

AMERICAN department stores and fashion shops are playing host to a Versace "feeding frenzy".

Since the murder of the Italian couturier, buyers have converged on every conceivable outlet where his fashion designs might be on sale, queuing, jostling and lunging for any article of clothing that bears the distinctive Versace Medusa-head logo.

"Everyone, it seems, wants a piece of the dead man," said a salesgirl at Bloomingdale's, New York's finest department store. "It's like the rush for bits of the Berlin Wall, only that was a time of celebration and this is really kind of spooky."

"We've never seen anything quite like this," said Frank Doroff, the store's vice-president. The demand for Versace's 150 jeans, 1,000 women's handbags, and even the Versace five-piece china set was "five times over what it was a year ago".

Yesterday, long queues of people formed outside many shops on Fifth Avenue, many of whom were clearly not the Versace "type". Stocky housewives, office men on their way to work and tourists in Bermuda shorts mingled with aspiring models and lean, rangy Lotharios, all in search of something — anything — by the late designer. "His clothes

are flying off the hangers," said a shopper at Bergdorf Goodman, clutching a Versace man's suit as if afraid it would be yanked from her.

Dawn Mello, the store's president, said: "We are selling everything we have in Versace. The dinner wear is sold out. And people are calling in from all over the country, as far as California, wanting specific items from the last collection."

Before his death, Versace had worked on the Spring/Summer 1998 collection, which hits the market this autumn. After that, there will be no more new designs, so buyers are desperate to acquire the last vestiges of a rapidly dwindling supply.

Kelly Patrick, a spokeswoman for Neiman Marcus, said: "In our San Francisco store, women's leisure wear has almost sold out. And the volume has been even greater in Florida, for obvious reasons."

Valerie Steele, the chief curator for the museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, said: "It's a known fact that when an artist or painter dies, the value of their art goes up. Since Versace died at the height of his prowess, one could expect that the value of his one-of-a-kind couture will go up."



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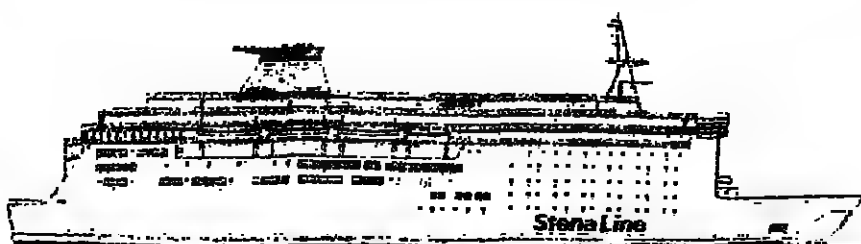
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هذه امينة الأصل

HOME IS AT RISK IF

Gore looks short of big ideas for long campaign

AL GORE has begun his race for the White House. For the past two weeks, with President Clinton playing the statesman in foreign capitals, the Vice-President has held court to the cameras at home, congratulating Nasa on the Mars landing and announcing tax cuts and new rules on air pollution.

This month, Mr Clinton has endorsed Mr Gore, earlier and more openly than any President has done for a would-be successor in 150 years. All the same, the Gore campaign is looking rattled. To win in November 2000, Mr Gore must defeat rivals for the Democratic nomination by the spring of that year, then beat the Republican candidate in the final high-stakes election. The first objective is now giving him trouble.

His main rival is likely to be Richard Gephardt, leader of the Democratic minority in the House of Representatives, although Paul Wellstone, a senator from Minnesota, is often cited as a dark horse.

Accused as much as Mr Gore of blandness, Mr Gephardt has fashioned himself as the champion of the outsider, the unions, liberals and protectionists who were ditched by Mr Clinton in his determination to make the Democrats electable. By contrast,



AMERICAN AGENDA
BRONWEN MADDOX

Mr Gore has the weight of the presidency behind him. Mr Clinton has given him White House resources, and the Vice-President has begun tramping around the states that are critical in the primary elections for the party nomination. Mr Clinton told NBC News that Mr Gore "has been unquestionably the most effective Vice-President in history. And if the people decide to make him President, they won't be disappointed."

Mr Gore's worry is that he is now so associated with Mr Clinton's conservative philosophy that the liberal wing of the party and Mr Gephardt could give him a nasty shock. The best strategy to win the nomination is to promise some-

thing for every part of the party, as Mr Clinton so successfully did in 1992. But the best strategy for a Democratic President faced with a Republican Congress is to move to the centre, as Mr Clinton has in his second term. Mr Gore's association with that conservatism will be a help in fighting a Republican candidate - but could prove a fatal handicap in the primaries.

In the next few months, it is likely to become clearer that Mr Clinton's interests are at odds with Mr Gore's, and that his support is worth less than it seems. With an eye on the history books, the President wants to get as much legislation through Congress as possible. In his desire to get a renewal of "fast-track authority", which would give him the power to get trade agreements through Congress without amendment, he is likely to offend many of the groups Mr Gore is courting.

Those strategic problems compound Mr Gore's shortcomings. He remains uncharismatic. Mr Clinton handles big themes of hope, courage and the future of Europe with authority. Mr Gore sounds more confident with technical subjects, and on the environment - his favourite - gives an impression of wistful impotence.

According to aides, he tries to relax, but the body language remains rigid. On a platform recently, he was left looking awkward when a Polish woman due to give a speech about her past dissolved into tears. In China, he toasted Tiananmen Square generals with champagne for fear of causing offence by refusing the glass.

Mr Gore remains the favourite to win the Democratic nomination and, on many counts, to be the next President. But it is hardly a foregone conclusion.

Leading article, page 21

Man who brought Internet to its knees

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON

THE CRASH of the Internet on Thursday was the fault of one man who is now "being dealt with very appropriately" it emerged yesterday.

Chaos reigned after a computer operator failed to heed automatic alarms going off at 2.30am on Thursday.

The glitch was traced to Network Solutions Inc, a firm in the Washington suburbs that keeps more than a million Internet addresses on an electronic master list. David Graves, the firm's Internet business manager, said: "What happened wasn't a technical problem. It was a human problem."

The executives refused to name the culprit but said they would make the "graveyard shift" a two-person job in future.

Every night Network Solutions shares its updated files with ten large Internet computers around the world, known as root servers. These are the Internet's traffic police, handling thousands of address requests each second and sending messages off in the right direction.

With the technician not reacting to alarms, corrupted files went out to the root servers, causing a cascade of bad addresses to spread throughout the global network. Internet users began receiving error messages that Web sites and e-mail addresses they used frequently no longer existed. Network Solutions sent out corrected files four hours after the garbling began, but it took many more hours for all the inaccuracies to be purged.

The crash was bad news for the firm, already under assault for having an exclusive agreement to register addresses for the US National Science Foundation, an early sponsor of the Internet. The contract expires next year.



Max returning to Johannesburg Zoo after hospital treatment for gunshot wounds

Robber shot in gorilla warfare

FROM INIGO GILMORE
IN JOHANNESBURG

A GORILLA named Max is recovering from gunshot wounds at Johannesburg Zoo after trying to grab an armed suspect who jumped into his enclosure while fleeing from police. The suspect was also shot.

The man, who had broken into a nearby home, scaled a moat at the zoo and jumped into Max's enclosure. The gorilla grappled with the man,

apparently in defence of his territory and his mate, Lisa. The robber fired twice at Max, one bullet lodging in his shoulder, the second passing through his neck.

The gorilla, who is 26 years old, also attacked two policemen who entered the enclosure, biting one on the buttocks and hitting the other. A third policeman was injured when he twisted his ankle trying to get out of the enclosure. In the fracas, police shot and injured the robber. Both

the robber and the gorilla were taken to Millpark Hospital in Johannesburg. Later officials loaded the gorilla onto a truck serving as an animal ambulance and Max went back to the zoo, his huge paw engulfing the vet's hand he was holding.

Max, who is from the former Zaire, was later described as cantankerous by zoo officials. They added that Lisa was "very distressed".

The robber and police were still being treated.

WORLD SUMMARY

Go-ahead for hotel in Golan

Jerusalem: In a gesture of solidarity with the 15,000 Jewish settlers on the Golan Heights, Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's Prime Minister, has given the go-ahead for the building of a 220-room hotel (Christopher Walker writes).

The announcement, certain to infuriate Syria which is demanding a total Israeli withdrawal as a necessary condition of peace, came as the Prime Minister toured the strategic plateau as part of celebrations to mark the thirtieth anniversary of its capture.

Ali kit for sale

New York: An extensive collection of boxing gloves, trunks, robes and letters which once belonged to Muhammad Ali will be up for auction in October. Christie's has announced here (Tunku Varadarajan writes). The sale, which will take place in Los Angeles, will include the letter Ali wrote in 1966 in the draft board, refusing to fight in Vietnam. The memorabilia is owned by a boxing fan from Long Island.

Police powers

Hong Kong: Guidelines empowering police to ban protests here drew criticism from civil rights groups. The administration granted police wide discretionary powers to ban protests or political groups on "national security" grounds. This was defined as threatening China's security, promoting independence for Tibet or Taiwan, or causing public disturbance. (Reuters)

Torture proved

Rome: An official inquiry has confirmed that Italian peace-keeping soldiers tortured Somalis in the country in 1993, the head of the investigation was reported as saying. "Certain episodes have been proved, even though at the beginning there were attempts to hide them," Enore Gallo said. (AFP)

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'Dream girl' nurtures vision of revolution

WHEN Giovanna Melandri talks about the "information revolution" in Italy, she is not just talking about the Internet and digital television. "It's a question of changing Italy itself," she says. "We are way, way behind. The communications revolution links in to all the other things we are trying to do — decentralising the appalling Italian bureaucracy, devolving more powers to the regions, empowering the citizen. We are changing the landscape."

Such sweeping declarations are startling from a woman of only 35 who does not yet hold ministerial office. But as spokeswoman on communications for the Party of the Democratic Left (PDS) — the core of Italy's centre-left Government — she is becoming one of the most photographed and talked about women in Italy. To her embarrassment, a recent survey put her near

ROME FILE
by RICHARD OWEN



the top of the average Italian male's list of "dream girls".

Signora Melandri bristles at any suggestion that her high profile has to do with her trim good looks or air of cosmopolitan chic. "I am not a model, I am a representative of the people. There's a whole new generation of Italians who have a global, rather than provincial, outlook."

She clearly comes from a different planet than the old-style Communist Party, from which the PDS evolved in 1991. She was born in New York, where her father was the correspondent for RAI (Italian state-run television) dur-

ing the Kennedy era. She speaks fluent English, lives with a wealthy and successful lawyer, and moves in a circle of writers, actors, tycoons, fashion designers and glitterati — "as much socialist as socialist" as one of her friends puts it. She buzzes around town on a motor scooter, and spends weekends at a villa on the fashionable Tuscan coast.

Yet she managed to charm the tough working class residents of Magliana, an area of rundown tower blocks which is the heart of her Rome constituency. They made her their MP in 1994, at a time when the political tide was running to the Right. She was re-elected in April last year.

"I had a much harder time campaigning in the better-off areas," she says. "I'm not a champagne socialist. I don't even drink champagne. What does worry me is that a new class division is developing, between those who own and use new media technology and those who do not. The informed and the uninformed, as well as the rich and the poor."

"I see three areas the Left has to tackle now that it is in power in Italy, Britain and France," she says. "Reforming the welfare state, privatising state-run industries and promoting the concept of citizenship — of belonging." But her main aim is to "secure a place for Italy in the global communications market" through privatising the cumbersome Italian telecommunications system and deregulating television.



Giovanna Melandri says Italy is way behind in the use of information technology

Guides are deaf to the rewriting of history

GUIDES on the Palatine Hill above the Forum are still pointing out the remains of an Iron Age hut as the "dwelling" of Romulus, Rome's legendary founder, despite a new theory that the city has its origins not on any of its seven hills but down by the Tiber.

Professor Mario Attilio Levi, a noted archaeologist now in his nineties, says his conclusion after a lifetime studying the origins of Rome is that its founders had first gathered near Tiber Island, on a broad bend of the river below Capitol Hill.

In ancient times the small island lay opposite Rome's main river port, where salt (essential for food preservation) was brought up from the coastal port at Ostia.

Professor Levi suggests that Tiber salt merchants, rather than shepherds on the hills, formed the first Roman community. He believes they may have traded with the Sabines (with whom they inter-married, hence the legend of the Rape) and the Etruscans.

Guides on the Palatine will have none of it. Romulus founded Rome in the eighth century BC after killing his brother Remus, they say, and that is that.

Nevertheless, the few modern residents of Tiber Island are delighted. The island houses the hospital and church of San Bartolomeo, built on the site of the Temple of Aesculapius, and a restaurant, Sora Lella, named after a popular Italian actress, which is doing even better business than usual.

Zoo trails in restoration league

THE restoration of the Villa Borghese gardens continues apace as part of Rome's millennial preparations. The 17th century Villa Borghese itself, with restored masterpieces by Canova, Titian and Caravaggio, has been under siege by visitors since it reopened earlier this month after a 13-year closure. Other great Renaissance buildings in the park, such as the Villa Giulia, have also been restored.

But the park also houses one of Rome's eyesores — the cramped and

old-fashioned Municipal Zoo, which has woefully inadequate facilities for its 1,100 caged animals. The zoo's lack of resources was highlighted recently when vandals climbed over the fence at night and started attacking a family of four tigers with iron bars and a billiard cue. One tiger, Alfiero, was killed, and another, Filippo, was badly injured. Claudio Manicassi, the zoo manager, said the zoo only had three guards at night, and their patrol car had broken down.

'Little Fish' murdered prince to wriggle free from the palace hook



Prince Thitipand and Mom Chalasai, the child bride who admitted killing him

FROM ANDREW DRUMMOND
IN BANGKOK

THE last chapter in a fairytale romance between a Thai prince, known as the "Frog", and the young "Little Fish" he adopted to become his child bride, ended at Bangkok police headquarters yesterday as the girl who was reared for the prince's bed confessed to his murder.

The princess, Chalasai Yugala, 25, sobbed as she admitted lacing her prince's coffee with a flea killer in an attempt to keep her lover, a chestnut seller she had met outside the palace walls.

Prince Thitipand Yugala, 60, a wealthy socialite and cousin of King Bhumipol Adulyadej, died in agony after ten days in August 1995.

A post-mortem examination showed that he had died of poisoning. Police were unable to pin the murder on her and she went on to become a show celebrity, talking about her rags-to-riches life.

This week, however, after being ditched by her lover, she broke down in remorse and confessed. Yesterday she was paraded in front of Snob Thienghong, the Interior Minister, who recounted her confession. Mom Chalasai told police: "I did it to escape from the palace. There was nobody else involved."

After the murder the chestnut seller who peddled his mobile stall around the palace was arrested in connection with the murder, but was released.

"Little Fish" (Luak Pla in

Thai) was a four-year-old orphan abandoned at birth. She was adopted under royal patronage to give her a chance in life. She was educated at the royal palace and it was there, at the age of 11, that she caught the eye of Prince Yugala. By the age of 14 she is said to have become the prince's mistress and she went to live at his palace and look after his children from a former wife. The affair was torrid. The prince showered her with expensive gifts including a Ferrari, a private plane and he taught her everything, including the art of lovemaking.

But "Little Fish" was a free spirit. While the prince regarded her as one of his private possessions, she often sought the company of people

her own age, slipping out of the palace at night to frequent swart discos and trendy nightspots.

In 1995 the couple married and at the wedding "Frog" embraced his wife with a kiss. On top the wedding cake were models of a frog and fish kissing. The words on their wedding invitation read: "Age is in the mind. But love will always be in the heart."

The prince was quoted as saying: "My wife does not need to be beautiful. Nor does she need to be a good cook. But she has to be great in bed. Luak Pla is my No 1 in this regard." Unfortunately for the heartbroken prince his young wife, who indeed was no beauty, was also the No 1 for other people. Just before the wedding she had run off with

a Swedish tourist to the Thai resort of Pattaya and the humiliated but smitten prince advertised in newspapers offering money for her return.

He got her back, but her wandering continued. She used to hang out with young croys in Bangkok shopping malls and had a passionate affair with the chestnut seller, Uthet Chugwa, with whom she hoped to elope.

The young bride may have had strong personal reasons for wanting to leave the prince. His punishments for her misdemeanours were severe. Prince Yugala boasted to friends that after she ran off with the Swedish tourist, "I bound and strapped her up and hung her from a hook in my bedroom for three days for humiliating me."

THE SUNDAY TIMES



MIDAS TOUCH

Gianni Versace: the man who made a fortune from bad taste
In Style tomorrow



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OF THE NIGHT

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We will like to be inside the Bankside

Nicholas Serota offers a private view of the Tate's two new London galleries

As the Tate celebrates its centenary on Monday, we look forward to the most spectacular development since its foundation: the opening of two new Tate galleries in London. The Tate Gallery of Modern Art, which will house the international collection (from 1900 to the present day), is due to open in the transformed Bankside Power Station in 2000. The following year sees the launch of the Tate Gallery of British Art, housing works by British artists from 1500 to a substantially redeveloped Millbank building.

Dividing the collections between "modern" and "British" is very much in keeping with the Tate's history. The vision of its founder, Henry Tate, was to create a National Gallery of British Art (its official name when it opened at Millbank in 1897); but 20 years later, in 1917, the gallery was given the added task of forming the country's international collection of modern art. There was a dynamic interplay between British and foreign art.

Some people have asked whether this special Tate "feel" will be diluted when the collections are divided. I hope that it will be further strengthened. The relationship between the two new galleries in London will be vigorous, with, for example, modern British works being exchangeable between them.

Furthermore, there will be more space to show key works in two changing panoras of British and 20th-century art.

Millbank's new role is of great significance. It will allow us to nurture and further stimulate appreciation of both historic and contemporary British artists. In 1990, for instance, we brought together a large body of work by Stanley Spencer. This display had such an impact that when it was dispersed after a year, visitors complained: previously, few had remarked on the absence of Stanley Spencer. That same display resulted in requests from museums abroad to borrow Spencer paintings, and a major exhibition of his work is to open in Washington next year. The Tate Gallery of British Art will offer a superb opportunity to set the record straight on our national achievement in the visual arts.

London is the only major capital city not yet to have our own national gallery of modern art. In Paris and New York, such museums are signs of a serious, national appreciation of 20th-century culture and are key tourist attractions. The opening of the Tate at Bankside will put us on a level with other cities.

I would like to argue that a visit to the Tate Gallery of British Art will be a rich, inspiring and welcoming experience. That sense of being in the presence both of history and of living art will be given a new vitality by new conjunctions of artists working in Britain — artists as diverse as Holbein and Hockney, Hogarth, and Gilbert and George. Occasionally we shall also give a sense of the visual traditions in Britain before the Renaissance, especially where such achievements have been important for later artists. The Tate will pose such provocative questions as: how do we define "Britishness" in art and culture?

The galleries will also be used in different ways. Entering the Duveen Sculpture Galleries at Millbank may give a serene feeling of light and airiness; however, there will also be unexpectedly crowded, less brightly lit rooms where, for example, groups of drawings and watercolours will be closely hung. Our aim is to recog-

nise the importance of watercolour and drawing to the British tradition. Moreover we wish to show sculpture from all periods.

Imagine a whole room of Gainsborough or Stubbs, and how much heightened our appreciation of those artists will be when many of their works are visible together. There are also less prominent artists who should become better known: Thomas Jones and Allan Ramsay from the 18th century, or Wyndham Lewis and Edward Burra from the 20th. At the same time, the gallery will meet the demands of regular audiences to see, again and again, such loved artists as Constable and Blake, both in the collections and as the subjects of special exhibitions.

Exhibitions at Millbank will be devoted to individual British artists from the 16th century onwards, or perhaps to a single aspect of an artist's work. Foreign artists who have had an impact on, or been affected by, British art could also be the subject of shows at the Tate Gallery of British Art, as might foreign artists who have lived in Britain. Britishness will be explored in all its facets.

Regional British schools, both historic and contemporary, will be featured occasionally, and there will be a place, too, for looking at movements from abroad which have influenced or been influenced by British artists. There will also be themed exhibitions, drawing together the work of different British artists and, sometimes, their relevant foreign counterparts.

London is alone in lacking a national gallery of modern art

Meanwhile, to enter the Turbine Hall of the cathedral-like Bankside Power Station, a great industrial building in the heart of London, in its new role as the Tate Gallery of Modern Art, will be an amazing experience. The scale of the building, plus the imaginative transformation of it by the Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron, will bring in visitors who may never before have been to the Tate. They will not be disappointed.

The Bankside galleries, however, will be contemplative, quiet spaces. Visitors will be able to engage intimately with individual works. It is hoped that there will be something to delight, stimulate and occasionally irritate everyone.

Bankside displays will anchor international art in an essentially British environment. Visitors will expect our interpretation of the 20th century to be distinct from other European museums. Thus, British 20th-century artists will be prominent in this international context as well as at Millbank. Special exhibitions will be devoted to all aspects of international 20th-century and later art. International art movements will be highlighted, as will individuals and groups of artists (including British artists), while exhibitions will explore the relationship between painting, sculpture, photography, film and architecture.

We expect that more than two million people a year will visit each gallery and that, encouraged by improved transport links between the two locations — including special buses and, we hope, riverboats — they will want to see both museums, as well as our sister galleries in the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery on Trafalgar Square. Such physical and intellectual connections will be important since, together, the two Tate galleries in London promise one of the most dynamic museum experiences in the world.

The author is Director of the Tate Gallery. Mr Tate's Gallery will be shown on BBC2 on Monday at 7.40pm.

The test of devolution is inward investment, not a Celtic vision of Europe, says Ted Rowlands

Wales cannot afford an assembly of zealots

As one of the minority of 25 per cent who voted for Welsh devolution in 1979, I am not surprised that the old arguments have reopened so quickly. They reveal the tension not only within the Welsh Labour Party but among the Welsh public. Even the most favourable opinion polls reveal a high percentage of don't knows. Only when the don't knows are "squeezed", to use the pollsters' phrase, does one arrive at a yes support of 43 per cent. The number of those bitterly opposed has fallen significantly, but ambivalence and scepticism remain. Why?

Much to the chagrin of the zealots involved in the yes campaign, a large proportion of the Welsh public does not buy the grandiose claims made for a Welsh Assembly. It does not identify with their concept of Welsh nationhood, nor with the notion of a Wales repositioned as a small nation or region in Europe.

Indeed, I suspect the majority do not define their Welshness in institutional terms at all. In the absence of any meaningful institutions since the Act of Union in 1536, we define our Welshness in linguistic and cultural terms. It has been shaped by historic economic experience. That certainly is the case of the valley communities. They fear devolution as a nationalist's agenda.

We do not share a Wales in Europe vision based on some

romantic view of a special affinity between the Welsh and other Celtic and regional cultures. I find no evidence that we feel a greater affinity to the Basques, the Bretons or the Bavarians, than to the people of Birmingham. The yes zealots, in fact, despite the enduring relationship of Wales in Britain.

However, to bolster the new view of Wales in Europe, exaggerated claims are made for a Welsh Assembly. It will become the new economic powerhouse and give us an especially powerful voice in the corridors of the Brussels Commission. Further, unless we have one, the Scots and even the English regions will steal a march over us, corner the inward investment and a disproportionate amount of European Union funds. Without an assembly, Wales will be ignored.

To give weight to these arguments, the economic success of some of Europe's regions has been because of their elected regional assemblies. But there is no causal connection between elected assemblies and economic growth. Some

regions with assemblies have grown, some have not. The case for democracy, frankly, has never been an economic one. Democracies are capable of making terrible economic mistakes. Autocracies are sometimes economically successful.

In the communities I represent, few believe that a Welsh Assembly will transform our economic life, or believe that, had there been one, our pits would not have closed. However, an assembly, we are told, will at least give us a greater voice in Europe. The Irish experience is much quoted. These claims are given some credence, deliberately so by the European Commission, which fosters the notion of a Europe of the regions to bypass the Council of Ministers.

But power resides with the Council of Ministers. We all might admire the skills of an Irish Government whose ministers on the Council have extracted a high price for their support. That is not the role that either a Welsh Assembly or Scottish Parliament will be able to play. They won't have a veto. They will be left to scratch

around for a fitting proportion of what is likely to be a diminishing regional fund competing with the needs of the new central European member states. What hope will there be of an enhanced regional budget when national governments will be painfully cutting their own expenditure to meet the monetary union targets?

The future of Wales cannot be dependent on some illusory hope of pulling harder at the purse strings of a smaller European purse. Where Wales in Europe does matter is in terms of inward investment, due to its access to the European common market. In this respect, without an assembly, we have been remarkably successful, enjoying twice our share of inward investments.

This Welsh success story has been achieved by the pragmatic and skilful combination of the powers and influence of the Secretary of State alongside the Welsh Development Agency in partnership with local authorities. So is there a case for Welsh devolution?

Yes — but it is fundamentally a pragmatic democratic one. The Welsh Office has accrued greater powers and a budget of more than £6 billion. A host of quangos has grown to deliver services on an all-Wales basis.

One of the fundamental tasks of representative bodies is to allocate, order priorities and scrutinise public expenditure. Westminster no longer does it properly. A large democratic deficit has grown. An assembly would remove that.

To do so does not require the power of taxation. Taxation powers of the kind proposed for Scotland constitute tokenism of the worst kind. They are meaningless when one realises that 88 per cent of all Welsh local government is financed from British taxation and borrowing. Taxation receipts raised in Wales fall short of expenditure by more than £5 billion — by the Maastricht criteria a borrowing requirement of 15 per cent of GDP.

An elected assembly fulfilling a traditional role of allocating and scrutinising, bridging the democratic deficit, replacing the unrepresentative quangos, run along lean and parsimonious lines could appeal to the Welsh electorate. We, however, don't need an assembly to redefine our Welshness. We know we are Welsh — and shall remain so — with or without one.

The author is MP for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney (Labour).

A very private consort

The Prince should marry his mistress. But the birthday party is a mistake

I am all for press freedom," says a character by Tom Stoppard. "It's the journalists I can't stand."

I am sometimes asked how a specific public figure should deal with the press. The question is easy and the answer universal. Don't. The question is invariably repeated. The press is so unfair, so inaccurate, so persistent. Surely a "good" journalist wants to tell the truth? Perhaps, I reply, but his version, not yours. Yet he only wants an interview and seems so nice. We need publicity for a charity, a book, a constituency, a marriage. Can it really be bad? Worse than bad, I say. Good publicity is in Heaven. The press wants bad publicity. Do not touch the press. This advice is strangely

which she (though not he) had never brought into the public domain. If anyone was entitled to privacy, she was.

Surely she was not about to blow it. The press, I cried, is not to be "handled". Consort with the press and you tumble through the gates of Purgatory, to be consumed by reptiles, fire and torment. The only honest press agent was Hieronymus Bosch. The Prince of Wales dabbled in this witchcraft and burnt not only his fingers but hands and arms up to the elbow. Press coverage is always asymmetrical. The public figure craves what the press will never give, a sauna of public appreciation. The press wants what makes the public figure miserable, at best a one-night stand, at worst gang rape.

Mrs Parker Bowles still has her dignity and public respect intact. Asking me to suggest a "good" journalist is like asking Cleopatra to suggest a good asp. This week-end sees the much-bruited 50th birthday party at Highgrove of the lady in question. The event is accompanied by the usual cast of merry pundits.

Professors, prelates, politicians and biographers queue up at the BBC to air their view on monarchy, church, state and people. Like disputants in Henry VIII's "Great Matter", they consult ancient tomes and fondle antique words such as adulteress, atonement, mistress, disestablishment, living in sin. They compete to use "morganatic" in a soundbite. Wolsey and Cranmer stir in their graves. Deep in the vaults of the Temple, learned friends rustle through papers and start clocks. Fat times are ahead for the cats.

I notice that the only people for whom this subject generates the slightest concern, as opposed to interest, are over 50. Ask a younger person about Prince Charles and marriage and the response is a shrug. So he married the wrong girl yonks ago. So he got divorced. So he wants to marry someone else he loves. Fine. It happens all the time. They say he may one day be King, a job for which he has pre-qualified. Fine again. The current wife of a King is known as a Queen, to love and support him in his work. Good luck



In 1975 the Prince and Camilla could meet discreetly. Now they are caught in the flashlight's glare

to them both. May they be happy. What's the problem? What's the Test score?

Even for the old guard, the Great Matter has become strangely circular. The King of England is head of a "Catholic" Church which, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, claims not to "recognise" divorce — like the judge who claimed not to recognise the Beatles. The Church cannot approve, let alone sanctify, the remarriage of its head. That is surely a problem for the Church of England, not the nation. As to whether the Church of England needs royal patronage more than royal patronage needs the Church, I happily leave it to others. If Gladstone could contemplate disestablishment, it cannot be too much for Tony Blair.

Yet a change in the marital status of a future head of state does require a change in the law, as well as the approval of the existing head of state. This is archaic. Only the most grotesque organisations examine spouses during job selection. Hereditary jobs are peculiar since offspring have the benefit of a closed shop for the succession. With genetic engineering still in its infancy, blood might be said to matter. But this assumes that

physical or mental prowess are crucial to monarchy. Those days are over. Nor is heredity likely to be an issue with Mrs Parker Bowles. If the law needs to be changed, change it. If Britain's "evolutionary" constitution needs to evolve, evolve it.

This must be the least dignified and significant debate in British politics. It can bring no particular joy to the public, and only anguish to those personally involved. Sensible people, certainly the overwhelming majority of young people, accept that the Prince and his friend should be able to marry. No public good lies in keeping them apart.

Yet pundits think of ever more devious reasons for obstructing them. It is said that public opinion will not accept Mrs Parker Bowles as Queen. It is true that heads of state need some popular legitimacy where they are unelected. Politicians have voters, teachers have pupils, sellers have markets. Royalty has no product, and no mirror in which to see itself reflected. Beyond a circle of sycophantic courtiers and admiring crowds, there stands only the press and the public. But public

opinion has a habit of accepting a fait accompli. Recent polls have shown a steady swing towards a marriage of Prince Charles and Mrs Parker Bowles. Last week's MORI poll for *The Mail* on Sunday showed 60 per cent in favour of the couple "staying together". Fifty per cent accepted that he could still be King, and a falling proportion (though still high at 71 per cent) accepted that Mrs Parker Bowles might be Queen. This shift in opinion has taken place against a background of churlish media comment and a blackout on publicity.

The one thing that will wreck this satisfactory move towards the inevitable is if someone gets Mrs Parker Bowles maintaining on publicity. Consultants are already circling round her court. Staats and weasels are showing seductive offers under Gloucestershire doors. The ghastly panjandrum is on the move. If the present 50th birthday celebrations are intended as a prelude to a public relations offensive, I shudder to think what may ensue.

The press is a lousy proxy for public approval. What the public will most readily accept is the sight of a new and happy royal couple, and public duties conscientiously performed.

Prom queens

TOMORROW night's programme at the Proms in the Royal Albert Hall will see the resolution either way of a dispute between the Proms authorities and the performing orchestra, a visiting troupe

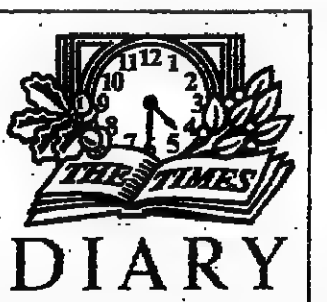


And what else did being a Tory MP equip you to do?

from Germany. The altercation began when the Ensemble Modern from Frankfurt, who will be playing a controversial programme of Frank Zappa and Steve Reich numbers, made the unprecedented demand that the Albert Hall organ be tuned to 442Hz rather than the 440Hz, to which it has been tuned since its installation in 1871.

Not so fast, said Proms organisers. The only way to achieve the desired 442Hz is by raising the temperature of the hall to 25C. "We have been in touch with the BBC weather office and it will be touch and go whether we can achieve the right temperature," said one of the organisers. "In the end, it all depends on how heated the audience gets. If we cannot raise the temperature, they will just have to play out of tune."

Asked why the German orchestra is unable to tune its instruments to the organ rather than vice versa, the organisers said: "Either it is to do with the fixed pitch of the percussion, or else they are just



being awkward." The Ensemble Modern's controversial demands are matched only by their choice of music. One piece by the 20th-century composer Lou Harrison, *Concerto for Organ and Percussion*, involves the organist striking the organ keys with a mallet. Not what Sir Henry Wood would call high culture.

Yesterday saw President Nelson Mandela turn 79 with a tribute from the financially afflicted South African Airways printed in most of the main newspapers. Under a picture of a jumbo jet are the instructions: "Hold newspaper at arm's length in front of you, make appropriate jet noises, tilt

towards your face and lift skywards, keep lifting over your head and gasp in awe. Repeat 79 times."

Nice work

SEVEN previously unpublished manuscripts by Agatha Christie have been unearthed by her daughter and grandson. The short stories, all discovered on the pages of lost literary magazines of the 1920s, such as *The Sketch* and *The Strand*, are to be published in one volume called *While the Light Lasts and Other Stories* by HarperCollins next month.

David Bawn, the Editor at HarperCollins behind the forthcoming publication, is palpating: "Anything new by Agatha Christie is of great interest. These ones are slightly different to her normal stuff inasmuch as they are not crime stories so much as romantic stories or stories based on the supernatural."

Stephen Pichard, Agatha Christie's grandson, said: "We knew they existed, it was simply a question of finding the magazines in which the stories had been originally published. There are some interesting

techniques which I am sure the experts will leap on."

Fishy tale

CUSTOMERS at the new Rainforest Café in London, which promises to "re-create the rainforest through a combination of live and animated tropical flora and fauna",



Lucky find: Agatha Christie

have been surprised to see tropical fish floating to the top of their tank, dead. The café has a menagerie of live macaws and parrots, simulated, animatronic elephants and a talking banyan tree called Tracy, all happily tolerated by the fish.

A waiter at the restaurant explained: "There is a problem with the plastic coral at the bottom of the tank. Some of the fish died and when they put some more in, they died too. An investigator is coming in to take a look this week."

Hair, hair

THURSDAY night saw the annual party thrown by Philip Oppenheim, the former Tory MP for Amber Valley, an all-round bloke. Accompanied by his Border collie, Vonn, he entertained the likes of Michael Portillo, the unforgivable Jerry Hayes, numerous Commons secretaries and a smattering of ex-patriate girls at his Chelsea home. Missing from his bathroom were the usual array of hair-restorer products. Having given up on retreating, he is ploughing his money into facial scrubs instead. Having recovered from this reve-



New venture: Oppenheim

lation, guests spoke of Oppenheim's various new projects. He has just about finished his novel — not that Salman Rushdie need lose any sleep — and is to embark on a magazine project with Adrian Lithgow, *The Mail on Sundays* saviour former political correspondent. Oppenheim says this is at an early stage, but the talk is that it will be a sort of *Loaded* magazine for over-35s.

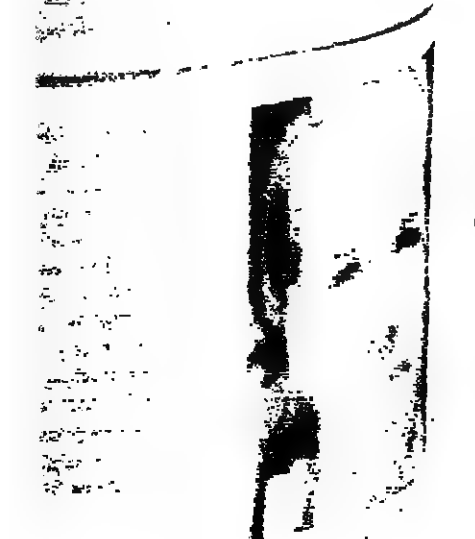
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PEACE ON WHOSE TERMS?

An IRA ceasefire does not end the need for vigilance

Gerry Adams' call on the IRA to institute a ceasefire offers hope to Northern Ireland and creates a formidable challenge for politicians across these islands. The peace process, fragile after a fraught marching season, has entered a new phase. There are opportunities to be grasped but there are also grave potential dangers. The silencing of republican guns would bring welcome, and overdue, respite for Ulster's people but the need for vigilance has not disappeared. The last IRA ceasefire was cynical, tactical and short-lived. Even as republicans protested their peaceful credentials mortars were tested and bombs primed. There is no evidence that Sinn Féin or the IRA have changed since then; their commitment to a united Ireland is unswerving. Only last week a republican bomb with the potential to create horrendous loss of life was discovered in Londonderry.

What has changed is the composition, and attitude of the British and Irish Governments. Both have been assiduous in their attention to republican demands. It is no coincidence that the statement from Gerry Adams follows an agreement between London and Dublin which would allow terrorists to enter talks, and remain at the table, without having to surrender a single bullet. If the IRA is serious about a permanent renunciation of violence and willing to accept the rules of democracy then an historic settlement could be possible which might give Ulster the peace and stability its people deserve. If, however, republicans engage in another tactical suspension and are determined to see Northern Ireland wrenched out of the United Kingdom then the terms on which they have been wooed will prove perilous.

It may seem pessimistic to the point of perversity to enter caveats when hearts yearn to hope. It would, however, be worse than naïve to forget at this moment all that has been learnt about the IRA during the murderous years of their long war. Clear-sightedness about their aims and strategy is a precondition of progress. Republicans have been heartened by the election in Dublin of a Government determined to champion nationalist interests rather than approach the peace process even-handedly. They still enjoy powerful support in the United States and know the SDLP leadership will do everything in its power to get

them, and keep them, in talks. The assembly of this pan-nationalist front gives republicans political muscle and the deal on decommissioning means they do not have to batter away weapons to exercise it. Additionally, republicans believe the election in London of a Government with a large majority makes marginalising Ulsterist voices more easy. From where Sinn Féin sits it does not believe it has to budge. After all, it has not had to move until now.

The Government's stated determination that negotiations on Ulster's future will be time-limited may appear to put pressure on republicans to bend lest others reach a consensus uncongenial to them. Sinn Féin will, however, be inclined to believe the opposite. Republicans hope that if no agreement is reached around the talks table next May then the two Governments will impose a "solution" over the parties' heads. Since that is what Sinn Féin wants, there is hardly an incentive to reach agreement.

That "solution", which Republicans envisage as a staging post on the path to Ulster's ejection from the Union, may be put to the people in a referendum. Sinn Féin is, however, hopeful that in any referendum the British Government will act as an advocate for a settlement opposed by the representatives of those who wish to stay British. The prospect of thus provoking Unionist discontent, and potentially encouraging loyalist violence, will only delight a movement which has spent 25 years trying to destabilise the Province. Republicans may be engaging in wishful thinking, but given the way in which the peace process has been shaped to their needs so far their expectations are far from irrational. Their mountain of weapons has forced ministers to come to them, and that mountain will remain.

The weeks ahead will require resolution from the British Government if the power of the pan-nationalist front is not to shape a solution for Northern Ireland contrary to the interests, and wishes, of the Unionist majority. Optimists believe that, if in talks, republicans would find themselves constrained by the need to accept the principle of consent and must learn to live with the Union, albeit a modernised one. Republicans have, however, shown no desire so far to live with anything other than the certainty of their cause and an armistice within reach. A new ceasefire changes much, but not that

CLINTON FOR GORE

White House endorsement is a mixed electoral blessing

With a mere 1,207 days remaining, the contest for the American presidential election is already under way. Were it not for the inconvenience of the American Constitution — which limits the chief executive to two terms — President Clinton would doubtless seek re-election himself. As he cannot, he has decided instead to designate his successor. As we report today, through policy, personnel, and personal intervention, Mr Clinton is actively assisting the ambitions of Albert Gore. This breaks with long-established precedents that presidents remain aloof from such matters until after their party has selected a candidate.

Mr Gore must also be somewhat uncertain about the value of this early endorsement. Mr Clinton's staunch support is not an undiluted blessing. Presidential enthusiasm is hardly essential to Mr Gore's prospects. An incumbent Vice-President possesses formidable assets in the American electoral process. These include high name recognition, the ability to raise the \$20 million or more required to run for the office seriously, and considerable influence over the rules of the race itself through control over the party organisation.

These advantages have allowed three postwar Vice-Presidents — Richard Nixon, Hubert Humphrey and George Bush — to capture their party's standard despite subdued support from the President whom they served. If Mr Clinton said absolutely nothing, Mr Gore would still be the likely Democratic contender.

Such a period of silence might assist the Vice-President. As Mr Gore knows better than most, the Clinton presidency has been a

roller coaster experience. For the past six months, the President has been relatively popular: some 60 per cent of Americans register their backing for him in opinion polls. But that standing is strongly linked to, and contingent upon, the present robust health of the American economy. Even now, at the peak of his appeal, a clear majority of Americans believe that Mr Clinton's legacy will be the scandals associated with him in power rather than policy accomplishments.

Association with this President may not seem as attractive in the year 2000 as it is today. Mr Gore's reputation for personal integrity has largely enabled him to remain immune from the political impact of the President's private indiscretions. Neither Whitewater nor alleged sexual harassment can possibly be tied to him. But he has been implicated in the set of campaign finance scandals that have hampered the Administration since the onset of its second term. The current Senate investigation into the links between the Democratic Party and numerous dubious Asian political contributors may yet produce more evidence that embarrasses Mr Gore.

Even if the President remains relatively popular, the Vice-President still needs to prove himself as an independent politician. It is unlikely that the American people will simply be seeking a surrogate for a third Clinton term. George Bush never fully escaped from the shadows of Ronald Reagan. Mr Clinton cuts a less substantial figure but Mr Gore is nevertheless inescapably linked to him. That could yet prove a liability that denies him the chance to take the oath of office in his own right.

PENNIES FROM PLUVIUS

Now is the season for discount tents

For those Britons about to set off across the Channel in search of sun, fun and as much lager as their bulging purses, weighed down by the fruits of a soaring pound, will buy, the Met Office has an unwelcome message. The British summer has reached the Continent before the island's natives. The weather forecast for most of Europe is rain, followed by more rain. It has been falling in torrents in Poland and the Czech Republic, causing catastrophic flooding. Rain is spreading west, has already drenched Austria, and is threatening to wash out the British political establishment in Tuscany and the Dordogne.

To those of us on this drizzly isle, the forecast is unusual; rain advancing from the east is not the experience of seasoned country folk. The giant vortex whirling the black clouds around the edge of the continent may presage something even more ominous, however: a global disruption of weather patterns that brings downpours to the deserts and dries up the rainforests. It all seems to be the fault of an unruly South American child: El Niño, the tepid current that flows up the coast of Peru and Ecuador

every Christmas. When it overheats, everything goes haywire. The winds blowing the warm air west slacken, the oceans around Australia cool, the eastern Pacific heats up, the rains that should fall in the Philippines fall in Latin America and the weather all the way up to Malibu destroys villas, fish stocks, crops and national economies.

When this child of the sea is temperamental, the world suffers. Last time El Niño threw a tantrum, in 1982, it caused damage estimated at \$13 billion worldwide, and set back the economy of Peru for a decade.

The rain now falling in Bohemia may, of course, have nothing to do with the Pacific. All manner of other reasons have been advanced, ranging from the volcanic explosion on Montserrat to global warming and world climatic change. Meteorologists will argue while the raindrops keep falling, but ignore the real reason. British holiday-makers have rarely had so much money to spend abroad. They are all ready to flaunt almighty sterling on the sun-soaked Mediterranean. That is the very moment for Pluvius to spoil our fun.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Public attitudes to lowering homosexual age of consent

From Miss Elizabeth Smith

Sir, Roger Scruton's intelligent and discerning comments about the ethical issues involved in the sexual conduct of modern teenagers ("Our sexual supermarket", July 15) convey a message which is too important to be confined to the pages of *The Times*.

Liberal attitudes to sex are responsible for causing confusion in the minds of young people about what constitutes a moral sexual relationship and what is simply an act of self-indulgence. No parent or teacher should pretend otherwise.

Mr Scruton's message must surely be spelt out to a much wider and younger audience.

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH J. SMITH,
42 Braid Farm Road,
Edinburgh 10,
July 16.

From Ms Helen Power

Sir, The Government and the Synod are fiddling while Rome burns [reports, July 15; letters, July 18]. For God's sake, let's get on with knowing and joyfully ordaining gay priests (who have much to give to the Church); let's equalise the age of consent to 16 and let's openly acknowledge that gay Armed Forces personnel have as much right as anyone to serve.

Then we can all get on with doing what matters: trying to create a moral framework in which it is the quality of relationships, both personal and professional, which alone counts.

Yours sincerely,
HELEN POWER,
46 Stallen Avenue,
Penylan, Cardiff.
hpower@glam.ac.uk
July 15.

From Mr Paul Barnes

Sir, One of the key arguments Roger Scruton puts forward for a higher age of consent for homosexuals is that young men will be at risk from homosexual advances if the age were to be lowered. Although this is a well-worn theory, all the evidence disproves it.

Future of EU

From the President of the Young European Movement

Sir, We in Britain should welcome the proposals of the European Commission for the future of the European Union (report, later editions, July 16; leading article, July 17).

For a number of years Britain has been arguing — rightly — for the EU not to forget the new democracies of Eastern Europe and for much-needed reforms to the common agricultural policy. Now the European Commission, often seen only as the evil motor of federalist integration, is proposing precisely such measures.

We should applaud this and embrace the opportunity to ensure that Britain plays her full part in shaping the EU for the 21st century.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY HARGREAVES,
President,
Young European Movement,
Dean Bradley House,
52 Horseferry Road, SW1,
July 17.

Euro notes

From Mr Selwyn Hodson-Pressinger

Sir, The European Commission's decision ("Hopes for 'plastic euro' fade", Business, July 14) to scrap plans to print euro notes on plastic is eminently sensible in view of Australia's less than successful experiment.

Having Her Majesty's face disappear of its own accord from Australia's plastic bank-notes will be an irony not lost on Euro-enthusiasts or Australian republicans. However, for Britons it merely serves to remind us Australia will probably still be using paper dollar bills with the Queen's face when we are using faceless euros.

Yours sincerely,
SELWYN HODSON-PRESSINGER,
4 Lyall Street, Belgrave, SW1,
July 15.

Rights and duties

From Mr Patrick O'Brien

Sir, Before hastening to encompass human rights within British legislation (letters, July 11, 16), would it not be prudent first to define a charter of duties that those wishing to seek their rights need to fulfil?

Yours truly,
P. O'BRIEN,
2 Evening Glade,
Ferdown, Dorset,
July 16.

Death of Versace

From Miss Anne McStravick

Sir, Gianni Versace was certainly the victim of a gruesome crime, but *The Times* announced the fact in a headline across the width of the front page. He was only a dressmaker, for heaven's sake!

Yours faithfully,
ANNE MCSTRAVICK,
85 rue de la Convention,
75015 Paris.
shs@mac.unesco.org
July 17.

In almost every European country there is an equal age of consent. In many it is 16 years or less. Yet I know of no evidence that young men in these countries are at any greater risk than those in Britain, where the age of consent for homosexuals is currently 18.

This same argument was used in 1995 by those who opposed a lowering of the age to 16. Yet four years on, the tide of procurement and seduction that they so firmly predicted has failed to materialise.

We should not use such spurious arguments to defend discrimination.

Yours etc,
PAUL BARNES,
34 Springdale Road, N16,
July 15.

From Mr David Bevan

Sir, I have long respected Roger Scruton for his liberal views. In the interests of keeping him fully informed, therefore, I must point out that on the Croisette yesterday I saw more than one example of elderly heterosexual men in the company of women apparently several years, if not some generations, their juniors.

Looking further afield, the terraces of the cafés in Monte Carlo are populated with "older" women, either singly or in groups, apparently quite untroubled by men of any age.

Is this purely a Riviera phenomenon, or has Mr Scruton ascribed to homosexuals alone the quality of ad-

Influence of youth

From Mr Joe Partridge

Sir, Considering Euan Blair's rumoured influence on policy concerning the environment and the millennium and the way the royal princes apparently exert on their mother's plans, might it not be worth lowering the age of consent, voting and everything else to 12 and have done with it?

Yours faithfully,
JOE PARTRIDGE,
86 Idmiston Road,
West Dulwich, SE27,
July 15.

Coming to terms with junk mail

From Mr Robert Breckman

Sir, Your correspondence concerning junk mail (July 17) has not mentioned unsolicited items put through a letter-box by the Royal Mail.

I have a notice on my door stating, "NO CARDS, NO LEAFLETS, NO MAGAZINES" and when a publisher ignored my repeated letters asking him not to deliver his magazine, I ultimately took him to the county court for trespass and won costs and compensation.

Others similarly pestered should do likewise to control this pervasive invasion of our privacy.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT BRECKMAN,
Breckman & Co
(Chartered accountants),
49 South Molton Street, W1,
July 17.

From Mr Brin Hodge

Sir, Would someone please explain why they find junk mail so irritating? I prefer it to come in a gaudy envelope which tells me what is inside, so that it can go straight into the recycling bin without giving me the task of opening it first. How much more civilised than an unsolicited phone call.

I do nothing that I am ashamed of.

Happy ending

From the Ambassador of Austria

Sir, May I comment on your report today, headed "Von Trapps' happy ending". The 1965 American-made film musical, *The Sound of Music*, has never been banned in Austria. There would have been no legal basis or any other reason for such an act. The film was made primarily for the American market and was therefore shot in English. It only made its way to Austrian cinemas and TV after a German-dubbed version had been produced.

The view of the von Trapps in post-war Austria has always been a favourable one. Most Austrians agreed with Georg von Trapp's attitude and there was never any official criticism of his decision to leave Austria under Nazi rule. In 1957 the Austrian Federal President bestowed the Decoration of Honour in Gold for services to the Republic of Austria upon Maria von Trapp.

This week's ceremony in Stowe, Vermont, coincided with a visit by 89 cadets of the graduating class of the Theresianum Military Academy, who three years ago chose Georg von Trapp as their class patron. The presence of the Austrian Consul General was meant as an official tribute and a warm sign of appreciation of the von Trapps by a new generation of Austrians.

Sincerely yours,
EVA NOWOTNY,
Austrian Embassy,
18 Belgrave Mews West, SW1,
July 15.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Art and craft in church sculpture

From Mr Peter Burman

Sir, James Dunnett's letter (July 12) does a service in calling attention to the important sculpture commissions in prospect at Westminster Abbey, but I am not sure that he is right to make such a sharp distinction between "artists" and "craftsmen". There are many ways of achieving good results.

Here in York, after a great debate locally and nationally, we are in the process of acquiring a new west doorway which will, I suspect, astonish the world by its beauty and interest.

The designs for the new sculpture have been modelled by sculptor Rory Young, after consultation about their theological significance with a member of the chapter, and carved by the outstanding team of carvers in the Minster stoneyard.

These carvers are men and women of great skill and sensitivity: the quality of their work can be seen from the finished examples on show in the Minster.

At Wells Cathedral one of the most successful new works is the king, made about 15 years ago by Simon Verity, a sculptor indeed but not too proud to work on the west front as a conservator so as to be able to understand thoroughly the language and gravitas of its 13th-century style.

At Lincoln, where I am chairman of the Fabric Advisory Council, we have new sculptures for the west front by John Roberts (an independent carver) and by Alan Micklethwaite (a member of our own stonemasonry and stone-conservation team) which I would be prepared to defend in any instant.

I question whether the sculptures of our great medieval Western cathedrals would normally have been made by the Ghibertis and Donatellis of their day; some were, of course, just as the *Christ in Majesty* at Wells was made by David Wynne and the *Christ Welcoming* at Liverpool by Dame Elisabeth Frink (neither of which looks entirely convincing in its context, I feel).

I suggest that they were more often made by carvers who were close members of a team, intimately associated with the building and thoroughly familiar with the context in which they were working.

I would like to see more of their kind today and I would like to see carvers given more confidence by getting more commissions, on buildings both ecclesiastical and secular. We have a superb abundance of talent in Britain in this field and, as the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has so eloquently stated in your pages (article, July 15), we need to recognise artistic work for the great national asset it is.

Yours sincerely,
PETER BURMAN (Director),
Centre for Conservation Studies,
Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies,
University of York,
The Kings Manor, York YO1 2EP,
July 16.

From Mr Simon Armstrong

Sir, Mr James Dunnett is not alone in his misconceived prejudice against 20th-century stonemasons. At Wells Cathedral copies of some of the angels from niches on the west front are being commissioned from an independent artist, not from the cathedral stonemasons.

Why do attitudes like this prevail? The craftsmen who designed and constructed these magnificent buildings were both technicians and artists. For example, in the 13th century Alexander of Abingdon, whilst working on the Eleanor Cross at Waltham, was referred to indiscriminately in contemporary accounts as *imaginatio* (sculptor) and *caementarius* (stonemason).

There are many stonemasons today who are able to turn dressing stone blocks to carving statuary with all the skills and anonymity of their medieval counterparts. There is no need for a distinction to be made between craftsman and artist.

"The idea that there was an insuperable barrier between the worker and the artist... was expressed... by intellectuals who judged, classified and stratified manual work of which they had no experience" (*The Cathedral Builders*, Jean Gimpel, 1983).

Yours faithfully,
SIMON ARMSTRONG
(Cathedral stonemason),
8 High Street, Nunney, Somerset,
July 14.

Cathedral closure

From Mrs M. J. Peel

Sir, In this college, for retired members of the clergy of the Church of England, our priests all hold strong, but not necessarily the same views on matters of doctrine, ritual and ethics, but on one issue they are unequivocally united: "Never upset the church flower-arrangers."

With their combined decades of experience, they know that Lady Bannerman (letter, July 10; see also letters, July 18) takes on flower-arrangers at her peril!

Yours truly,
DALONI PEEL,
The College of St Barnabas,
Blackberry Lane, Lingfield, Surrey,
July 18.

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The royal
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exposes
itself
features - 7

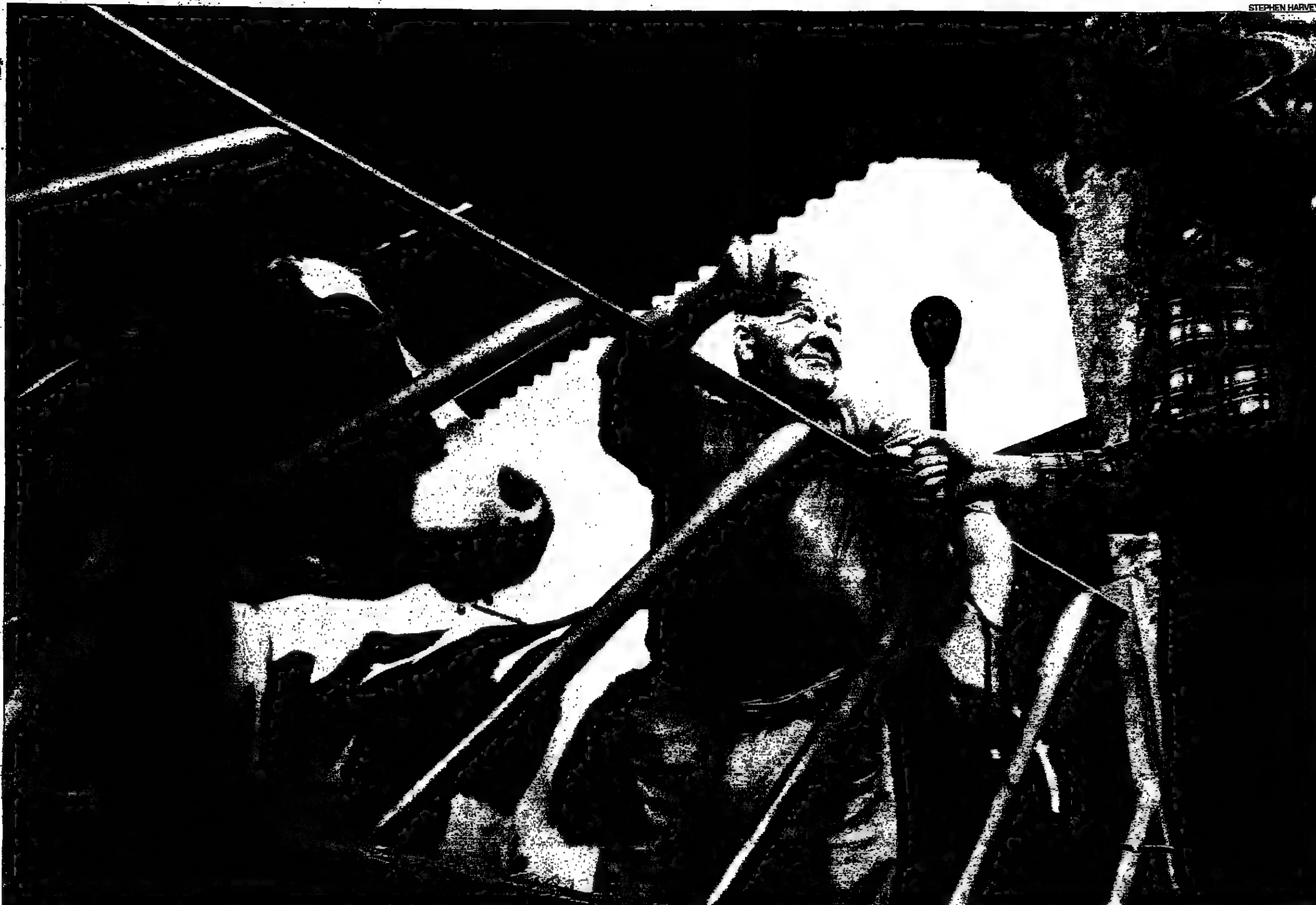
THE TIMES weekend

Why sick
pets are
given the
needle
features - 11



SATURDAY JULY 19 1997

Radio 4's *Farming Today* is under threat. **Damian Whitworth** on an eccentric corner of the broadcasting field



Many early-morning listeners, not only country people, hope that Radio 4's *Farming Today* will continue till the cows come home, whether it is commenting on farmers' views and agricultural doings or ministerial un-doings

N Mucking about at the BBC

Next Thursday is Judgment Day at Radio 4. James Boyle, the controller, has devised a major shake-up for his station and will explain to the BBC governors which programmes he wants to cast into outer darkness.

One of those widely tipped for the chop, or at the very least radical change, is also one of the corporation's oldest. Its rural tone was around long before Boyle was born; it goes on air six days a week at a time when most senior executives at the BBC Broadcasting Company are still in bed. For 15 minutes every weekday and 40 minutes on Saturday it concerns itself with Britain's biggest field of employment and has been the preferred listening of 'early risers' everywhere, town or country. And its influence on recent political life should not be underestimated.

Farming Today, 60 years old this year, is expected to be axed or subsumed into a new, ex-

tended *Today* programme. Either option will cause uproar among its listeners, many of whom have discovered a new lease of campaigning life after the success of the recent countryside rally in Hyde Park. The threat to *Farming Today*, they argue, is just another assault on their way of life. But on this occasion they can count for support on an army of townies who greet the dawn fortified by a dose of milk quotas and outside broadcasters drowned out by bleating.

Boyle's office says he is a regular listener to *Farming Today*. But if the 6.10am transmission time has been a weakness for the programme — because many executives and mandarins are unfamiliar with it and so do not care about it — then it has also been its greatest

strength. At that ungodly hour *Farming Today* provides a surreal bridge between sleep and the harsh realities of *Today*'s John Humphrys and James Naughtie, an interlude as bewildering as the dreams from which listeners are trying to raise themselves.

While *Farming Today* is an important information service for those preparing to put oil in their tractors, only 10 per cent of listeners are farmers. The rest of the one million who tune in each week hail from every geographical location, conurbation and country, and from all walks of life.

Regular listeners, such as Bob Ayling, the chairman of British Airways, and the union boss Bill Jordan say the programme provides a window on rural life from their hectic

urban routine. They love its idiosyncrasies.

The precursors to *Farming Today* first crept on to the airwaves in 1929, starting with the solemn listing of the Fatstock Prices.

Things livened up by comparison when Douglas Hurd's father, Anthony, a Times journalist, took over a weekly evening programme called *Farmers Only*, from which *Farming Today* emerged in 1937. By 1964 it had a daily dawn slot but the Fatstock Prices remained.

The noisiest row over its future occurred in 1990/91 when again it was threatened with the axe. But it was saved by a vociferous campaign and the fact that its producers had

the foresight, in the mid to late 1980s, to make it more palatable.

One of the driving forces behind the change was Dylan Winter, a producer and presenter of the programme who appreciated that at that time of the morning things could, and should, be just a little crazy. "The beautiful thing about *Farming Today* is that your boss is in bed when it goes out," he says.

Winter's particular brand of presenting was defined by his treatment of the by now legendary Fatstock Prices. One day, instead of the office PA reading this tedious shopping list, listeners fumbling for their socks were hit by the cheery Irish brogue of Terry Wogan. The next day it was Jimmy Young.

"You can't get duller than the

Fatstock Prices. We basically lured Wogan and Young by saying that the other had agreed to do it. We didn't tell the listeners who was doing the readings before hand. Wogan did them like that chap who does the football results and tells you by the tone of his voice who has won. You could tell before he finished whether a price was up or down."

The anarchy was picked up by the guests. Winter's partner in crime was Tim Finney, now an organic butcher, who presided over some of the more bizarre on-air proceedings. One morning Robin Pooley, then chief executive of the Potato Marketing Board, was a live guest in the studio. "I told him just before we came back on air what I was going to ask him and that we had 25 seconds

left. We came on air and he said: 'I've no idea what you are talking about but I do think the standard of bacon in the BBC breakfast is terrible.' And he talked about this until the end of the programme."

The next week, by coincidence, Pooley's brother, Peter, a big shot in Brussels, was on. Finney asked him a tricky question and recalls: "He said, 'That's a very interesting question...' and then he just started barking. I said: 'What's going on?' and he said: 'Woof, woof: I've got an Old English sheep dog here and he wants to go for a walk. What's the question again?' He didn't have a bloody dog. He didn't want to answer the question and he wanted to go one better than his brother."

Such lunacy was born in an atmosphere that would horrify the corporation middle managers today. Finney recalls members of the *Farming Today* team regularly going out for a

Continued on page 3

SHOPPING 14 GARDENING 16 LIFE AND SOUL 7 PROPERTY 8-10 FEATURES 11 COUNTRY LIFE 13 TRAVEL 15-21 GAMES 23

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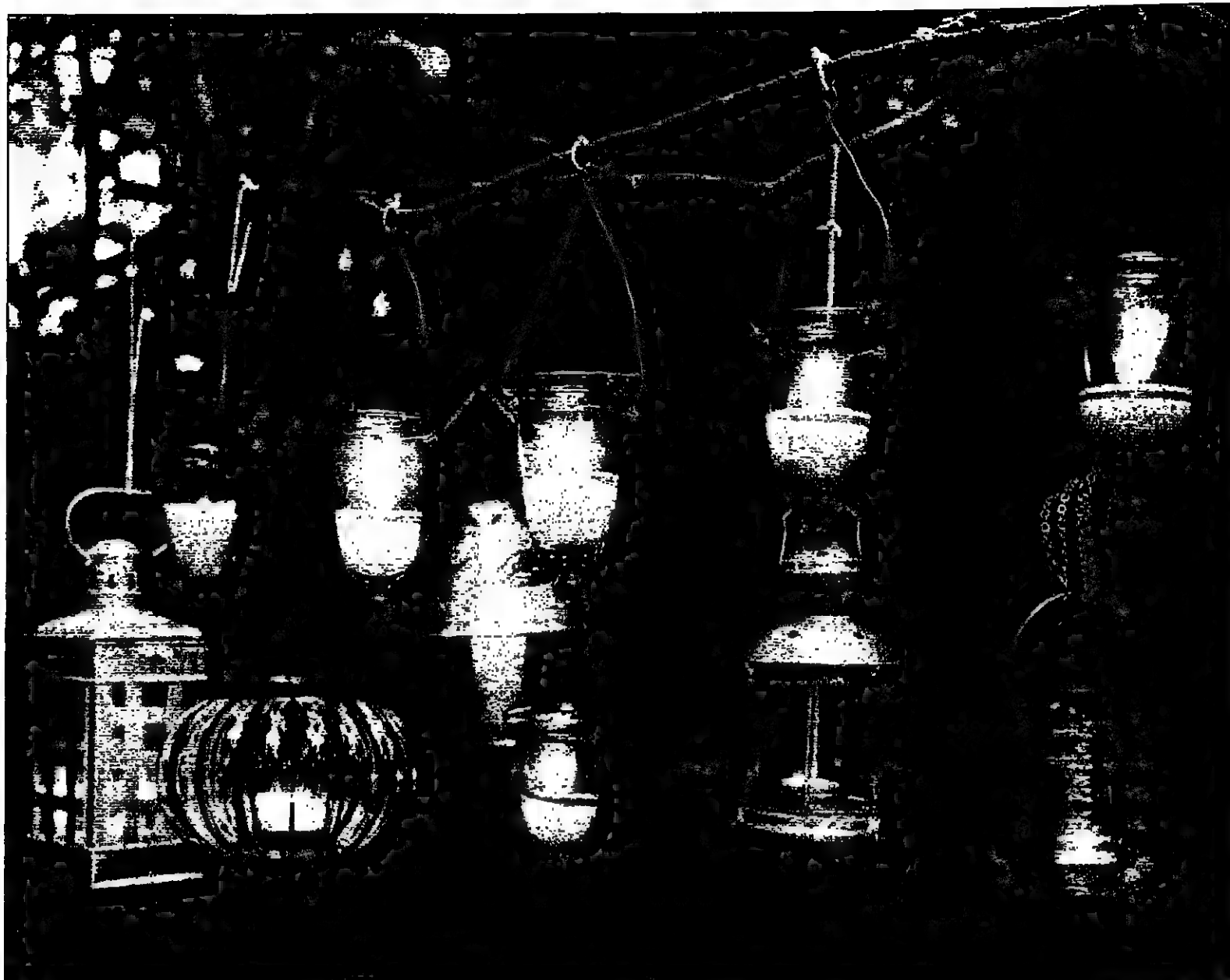
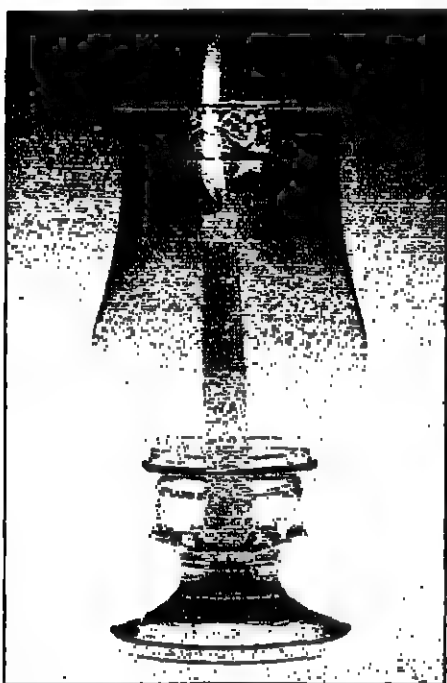
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How does your garden glow?

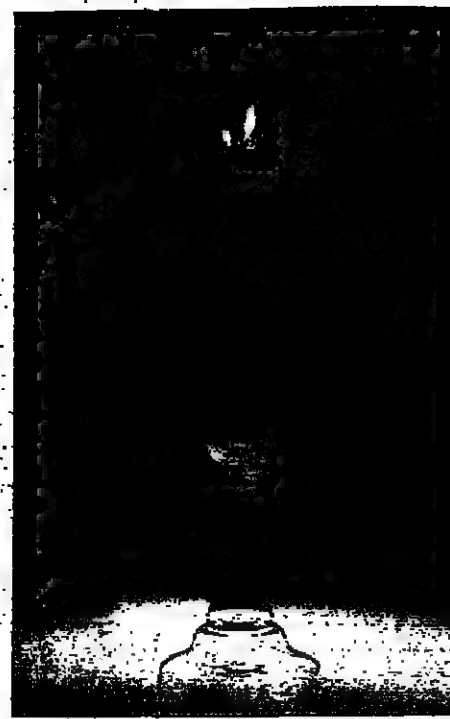
What better way to shed light on those long hot summer evenings, both indoors and out, than with the magical warmth of a lantern? Sudi Pigott selects some of the best



ABOVE: Cylindrical storm lantern, £14, Habitat, branches nationwide (0645 334433)
BELOW: Moroccan-inspired glass lantern by Maryse Boxer, £25, in six colours, from Chez Joseph, 26 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-245 9493)



TOP ROW: Top Tiny night hanging candle, £8.95, Colour Blue, Beckhaven House, 9 Gilbert Road, SE11 (0171-820 7700); BOTTOM ROW (left to right): Hurricane lamp with criss-cross lattice pattern, £14.95, The Cornish Shop, Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-589 7401); Melon lantern, £12.95, The Pier, branches nationwide (0171-814 5020); Indonesian free-standing metal lantern with perforated leaf design, £39.95, The Pier, as before; Tall spiral candle holder, £14.95 (including candle), Colour Blue, as before; Zinc lantern with star motif decoration, £9.95, Angello, 8 Neal Street, WC2 (0171-240 2114); or for nearest store call 0171-267 9299; Ribbed glass lantern on a chain in blue or orange, £7.95, Angello, as before
Photographs by Des Jensen. Styling by Caroline Grimbs



ABOVE: Elegant extra tall hurricane-glass storm lantern, £125, Marston & Langinger, 192 Ebury Street, SW1 (0171-824 8818)
BELOW: Close Vantage lantern, £1.129, Laique, 182 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-499 8228)



'It filtered down from command level that No 10 was not happy'

Continued from page 1
drink after preparing the next day's programme, staying too long in the pub and then deciding it was not worth going home.

People used to sleep in the office and get a wake-up call from reception to do the show. Then one chap, who got booted out of home by his wife, lived in the office for four months and nobody batted an eyelid. It was very easy. He had 24-hour access, a 24-hour canteen, showers and baths and toilets and slept on a chaise-longue. The only thing he didn't have was somewhere to do his laundry.

But it wasn't only the staff who made themselves at home. The *Farming Today* conference room, above the office in a strange half-forgotten corner of Broadcasting House, was also inhabited. "On a couple of occasions we

went in and disturbed somebody asleep under the piano. I recognised her as someone who had come in looking for a job. I saw her a few times after that in Broadcasting House looking terribly sheepish. She was a sort of bag lady who had made her camp up there. The jobs were advertised on the notice boards and she would go round bang on all sorts of doors, get rejected, go and have some lunch and then go back to her hidey hole."

The relaxed and charmingly chaotic working conditions did not make things easy for the reporter-presenter (journalists did both). "We used to spend a lot of time sleeping in cars. You would finish the show and then go and sleep outside a Little Chef, have breakfast and record a story somewhere up country and send it over for the next day's programme," Winter says.

Those who lived nearby would go home for a snooze

after the show and then return at normal office hours to plan the next day's programme. One female reporter, befuddled after such a start to her day, arrived at work fearing the sack in the belief that she had overslept and missed the show. Only when a recording was played back and she heard herself presenting that day's broadcast did she accept she had done it. The environment in which the programmes were made may have been insane but the mission to inform was not forgotten.

Farming Today broadened its appeal by dropping the Fatstock Prices and tackling more general countryside issues, but was ahead of most of the field on the biggest farming story of all. "Dylan Winter made a fantastic programme on BSE but *Today* and *PM* weren't interested until months later when the newspapers started running stories," Finney says. The programme's handling of the beef crisis has continued to receive widespread acclaim, culminating in this year's Sony Award for its programme *Apocalypse Cow*. This year, too, it received the Glenfiddich Radio Programme of the Year award for its exposé on Spain.

I could be argued that the influence of *Farming Today* in the 1980s was as great as any other radio or television programme. It was certainly the preferred listening of Margaret Thatcher, who caught just a few minutes of the radio every morning before starting work around 6.30am.

"Once Mrs Thatcher spoke to the NFU and said that farmers and other early risers listen to *Farming Today* and I recommend it to you". So we stuck a recording of that on the answerphone in the office," Winter says. "A few days later the message came down from on high in the BBC to 'get that off the answer machine'." It had filtered down through levels of command that No 10 was not happy.

For others, Thatcher's fascination with the programme was less amusing. "She was a regular listener and, as a result, it used to put her at a considerable advantage over her colleagues. Many of them were reduced to listening to it themselves in order not to be upstaged," says Sir Charles Powell, who was her private secretary. He is discreet about naming names, but adds: "I heard reports on the Whitehall

grapevine of ministers going back to their offices and cursing that they weren't being kept as up to date as she was. Sir Bernard Ingham, Thatcher's former press secretary, concurs. "She displayed an alarming knowledge of the subject of agriculture, much to the distress of the ministry. She was always better briefed than most of her ministers. Frequently her listening came out in remarks, and it was important for the problem of Europe because she would know about milk quotas or whatever."

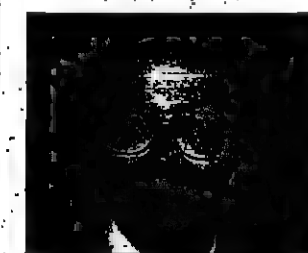
John Gummer, a former Minister of Agriculture, suffered miserably as a result of *Farming Today* and did not want to discuss the programme when I called him. Winter was the first man to get the acerbic food hygienist Professor Richard Lacey on the radio, and on one occasion he tore into Gummer. "Presumably Thatcher heard it and gave Gummer a bad time," Winter says, "because I was summoned to the Ministry of Agriculture and as I went up to Gummer's office I met him in the lift. I said 'hello' but he ignored me completely. I was going to follow him into his office but I was stopped and kept standing there in the corridor. Eventually I went in his office and he was sitting at

this huge desk, and he said he had never been treated so badly. After that we let Lacey have another crack at him." Douglas Hogg, another former agriculture minister, didn't serve in Thatcher's Cabinet but observes grudgingly: "She didn't sleep. Most people are sensible enough to go to sleep." Throughout his BSE-tormented days he listened to the programme only on Monday mornings when driving up from his constituency, but says he would mourn its passing. "I never had any complaints about the way I was treated by *Today* or *Farming Today*. It would be a loss to the farming community, there is no doubt about it. And you could argue that it is part of the obligation that flows from having a public service licence fee."

For Nicholas Soames, also a former agriculture minister, *Farming Today* is as much part of his morning routine as bacon, egg and black pudding. He is spilling for a fight against what he sees as dangerous homogenisation of Radio 4. "It is generally my experience that the better sort of politician, of whom there are increasingly few, wakes up to *Farming Today* every morning. It is an old, valued



Addict: Lady Thatcher



Fan: Jack Cunningham



Bitten: Paula Hamilton



Fatstock man: Terry Wogan

BOYLE'S LORE

JAMES BOYLE, the controller of Radio 4, spent six months reviewing his programmes before drawing up plans for his revamp.

Nobody knows for sure what he has decided but there have been a number of apparent leaks from the BBC about what is to disappear from the airwaves.

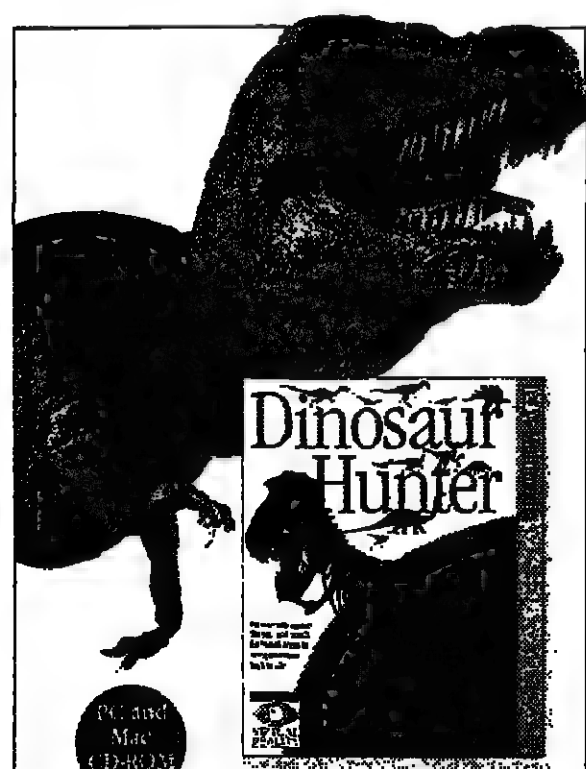
Suggestions that up to 20 or 30 programmes are to go are almost certainly exaggerations, but there are likely to be a number of losses and major rescheduling of the survivors. One of the strongest rumours is that *The Archers* may get an extra weekend edition. Those who believe this is being offered as a sop because *Farming Today* is to be either axed or truncated and incorporated into *Today* argue that this misunderstands agricultural broadcasting completely.

There have been questions in the Commons following talk that *Yesterday in Parliament* is under threat, and angry comment about suggestions that the *Journalist of the Week* might be altered.

Staff at *You and Yours*, *Sport, Pic Four* and *Breakaway* are said to be anxious, and Ned Shierrin may be at a loose end if his boisterous Saturday morning show goes, as some believe it will.

Kaleidoscope, *PM* and *Woman's Hour* may also find themselves in different slots.

D.W.



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glow?

Heath Brown on the

mid-season transitional styles that are being tested on the high street

Blast of winter for the summer

The transitional season is upon us — that time of year when the fashion houses introduce a range of clothes between their summer and winter collections. They are not made up of the first delivery of the autumn/winter ranges, but of revamped pieces from summer as well as tasters of what is to come in winter.

Having a transitional range gives us the opportunity to present a strong indication of the season to follow," says Angela De-sio of Jeffrey Rogers. "It also gives the customer new and exciting garments to wear."

Labels such as Oasis, Laura Ashley, Warehouse and French Connection all do these ranges — whether they call them mid-season, cruise wear or transitional. Some labels, such as Gap and Next, are regularly stocking up with different fashions. "We are continually introducing new deliveries," says a spokesman from Next. "We can offer customers something different every time they come in."

It is also a trial period. As well as definite looks from the new autumn/winter ranges, new shapes, lengths and styles in a variety of colours are introduced to see which the customer likes best. At Marks & Spencer the popularity of certain colours is tested with different styles of T-shirts, and whichever one proves the most popular will be marketed.

When buying, go for anything in white — it looks good for the tail end of the summer and will be perfect for the incoming 'icy winter' styles. Also lure the thrashing and hints of sparkle work for both daywear and eveningwear in unfussy separates — simple tops, T-shirts, trousers and jackets. For tailored clothes, choose pin-stripe, the new winter blockbuster, and skirts should be mini.

But remember, if you like it, buy it — for transitionals always have a short shelf-life.

Photographs by Richard Burns. Hair and make-up by Sarah Gottschick using Glauca Rossi Products (mail order, 0171-289 7485). Styling by Amanda Uppal



ABOVE: White cotton stretch jacket, £39.99; matching trousers, £29.99, Jeffrey Rogers, The Plaza, 120 Oxford Street, W1 and branches nationwide (01823 474400). Bright blue cap sleeve cotton T-shirt, £20, French Connection, 249 Regent Street, W1 (0171-483 3124)

LEFT: Pin-stripe shirt dress, £30, Etam, 484 Oxford Street, W1, and selected branches nationwide (0171-494 4732)

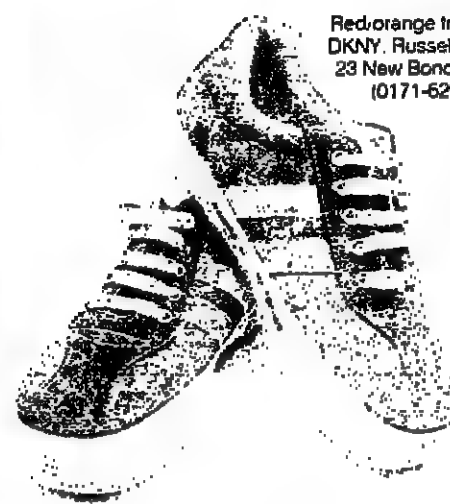
THREE OF A KIND

TRAINERS are no longer just made for sport — welcome to the age of virtual training shoes for those in fashion's fast lane. H.B.

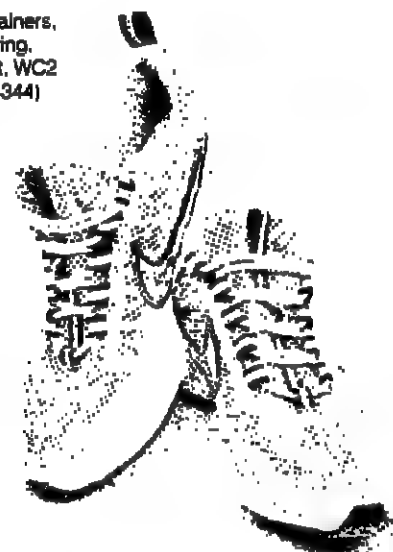
Black/white trainers, £54.95, Acupuncture, Office, nationwide (0171-221 9014)



Red/orange trainers, £65, DKNY, Russell & Bromley, 23 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 6903)



Silver mesh trainers, £90, Offspring, 60 Neal Street, WC2 (0181-638 4344)



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Today *The Times*, in association with the Tate Gallery, London, offers readers the exclusive opportunity to own poster-sized prints of the four famous paintings featured here for only £6.95 each, plus p&p, a saving of £2 per poster.

The four images, Heron's *Horizontal Stripe Painting*, Burne-Jones's *King Cophetua* and *The Beggar Maid*, Constable's *Flatford Mill* and Turner's *The Shipwreck*, are currently on display in the Tate Gallery as part of the Tate 100 Centenary selection.

The overall size of three of the posters is 60x80cms. The Burne-Jones is 40x80cms. They are only available by mail order and not currently on sale in the Tate shop.

As well as being part of the current Tate 100, two of the images are to be included in forthcoming exhibitions. The Burne-Jones will be in *The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and Watts: Symbolism in Britain 1860-1910* which opens in October. The Heron is to be part of a retrospective next June.

Post the completed order form to: Tate Gallery Publishing Ltd (Times Poster Offer), Millbank, London, SW1P 4RG. Allow 28 days, from receipt of your order, for delivery. Offer ends August 31, 1997.

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Lilac/blue lurex stripe T-shirt, £30, French Connection, 249 Regent Street, W1 (0171-493 3124). Denim A-line skirt, £24.99, Oasis, branches nationwide (01865 881986). Multi-coloured leather wedge sandals, £54.99, Ravel, 184-188 Oxford Street, W1 (0171-631 0224)



Gold sparkle cotton vest, £30; gold silk embroidered trousers, £80, French Connection, 249 Regent Street, W1 (0171-493 3124). Bright blue suede strappy mules, £185, Gina, 189 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-235 2932)

could you offer a come-from-home?

GABRIAS

CHANGING TIMES

GEORGE PLUMPTRE

The exotic cover story

Vibrant images of cottages covered with dazzling orange bougainvillea, fences near-invisible under the luminous orange trumpets of *Pyrostegia venusta*, the golden shower, or trees dripping with trails of palest pink Wonga Wonga vines are frequently among the memories we bring back with us from holidays in warmer climates.

The good news is that the run of warmer summers increases our chances of success with these exotic climbers which flower so vividly and luxuriantly in the Mediterranean and the tropics. In fact, they can be grown in Britain with little more trouble than it takes to grow pelargoniums.

Research by the University of Reading predicts that carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere will continue to increase, leading to a rise in global mean temperatures of 2C by about 2050. Unfortunately, this does not guarantee frost-free winters, but it does mean that well-ripened plants have a better chance of surviving cold winters.

While conservatories and glasshouses are ideal for permanent and overwintering tender plants, they are not essential. In Holland in the 17th century, when the rich merchants kept newly introduced exotics in ornate orangeries, people with less money protected theirs under a lean-to made of straw-packed bundles. It is even easier today. Tender climbers planted against sheltered south and west-facing walls can be given additional protection with curtains of netting, horticultural fleece or bubble polythene. (Make sure that the roots are thickly mulched, as you would for a fuchsia, and then, if the

With warmer summers predicted, it should be easier to grow those lush climbers, says Barbara Abbs

top growth is damaged by frost, new shoots will often appear from the base.)

Exotic climbers can also be grown successfully in containers. Indeed, some vigorous species, such as passion flowers or bougainvillea, can be more easily kept within bounds if confined in a pot. Guy Sisson at the Plantsman Nursery in north Devon, where there was 12 degrees of frost last winter, grows his extensive stock of climbing plants in unheated greenhouses. Even such glamorous ramblers as *Beaumontia grandiflora* survived.

He recommends several that can be grown in pots, cut down in late summer and stored inside for the winter. A cellar, garage or spare bedroom will do if the temperature does not fall below zero.

The plants should be kept very dry but not allowed to dry out completely. As soon as growth begins in the spring, plants kept in dark places will need to be moved into the light. New growth can be supported on canes or trellis.

Top of Mr Sisson's list is a perennial convolvulus, *Ipomoea indica*, with rich blue trumpets which turn purplish as they age. The woody stem should be cut back to 3ft and the plant brought inside before the frost. Keep it dry.

There is also *Mandevilla x amoenae* 'Alice du Pont', with its glowing pink flowers which grow up to 4ft wide. The stem can be cut back to within a foot



Passiflora racemosa

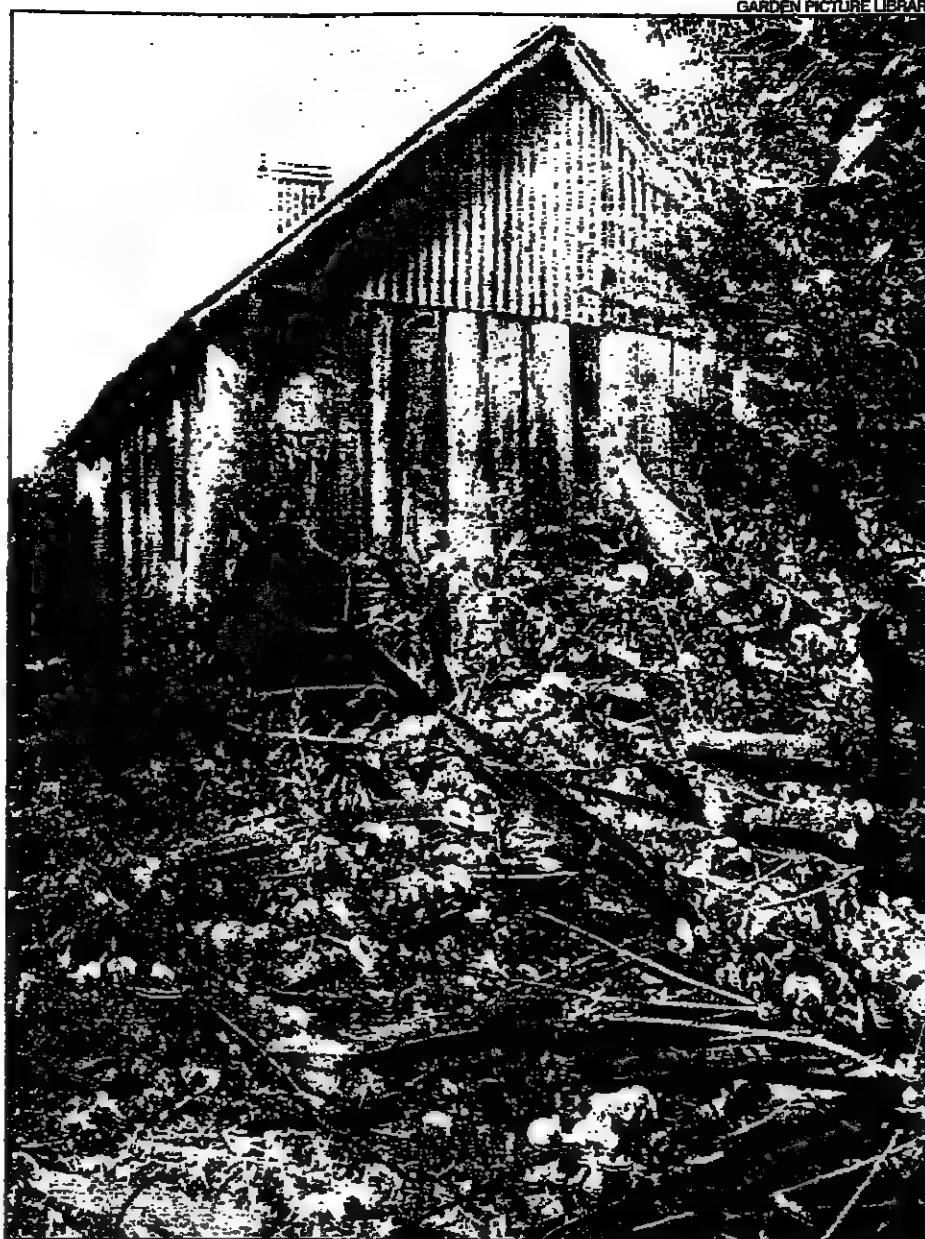
before overwintering indoors in dry conditions.

Try the fast-growing *Thunbergia grandiflora*, which can be cut back to 2ft before the winter. It has trumpet-shaped flowers from pale to deep violet-blue, and must be kept in the light during the winter because it is evergreen.

The bower plant, *Pandorea jasminoides*, is also evergreen and should not be kept in a dark garage or cellar during cold weather. The pandorea has clusters of white flowers with rich pink throats and flowers for a long period.

One of the easiest plants to store over winter is the wonderfully exotic red and yellow flowered *Gloriosa superba*, or climbing lily. It grows from a tuber, which should be lifted and kept dry and frost-free over the winter.

The climbing ragwort, *Senecio confusus*, has large orange



Hardenbergia violacea produces showers of small violet pea flowers in early spring

ange daisies that age to red. This can be cut back to 6ft and should be kept on a bright window-sill during winter.

Slightly harder are *Hibbertia scandens* with rich yellow flowers like single roses, *Kennedia rubicunda* with pea flowers of dusky coral and *Hardenbergia violacea* with showers of small violet pea flowers in early spring. These can be kept in a sheltered place over winter, wrapped in fleece or bubble wrap.

Westdale Nurseries in Wiltshire specialises in bougainvillea. The tiny white flowers of this plant are insignificant but the papery bracts in vivid colours are unmissable. It is available in shades other than the violent cerise of *B. glabra*, a colour I used to hate until I saw it growing on a white-painted cottage against a Mediterranean blue sky. Avoid using it against brick walls in our northern light, or try some of the subtler reds and oranges

that are available. I grow *B. 'Miss Manilla'* which looks bright enough to me, although described simply as pink. Bougainvillea can be pruned back firmly and benefits from a cool resting period. If the temperature drops too low, however, it can be late in coming back into flower. For maximum flowers, give bougainvillea the sunniest spot. In a conservatory, and with careful management, it will flower more than once a year.



The climbing lily *Gloriosa superba* 'Rothschildiana'



Bougainvillea glabra

John Vanderplank's splendid displays of passiflora exhibited at the Chelsea and Hampton Court flower shows have demonstrated that there is far more to passion flowers than the well-known *P. caerulea*. This is almost hardy but the flowers are not showy and, like many of its fellows, it is a rampant grower.

Less vigorous and more eye-catching is *P. 'Incense'*, which is fragrant, equally tough and has violet petals and sepals with deeper violet filaments banded with white. *P. racemosa*, with long racemes of scarlet flowers, really needs to be under glass, preferably trained across the roof so that the flowers can hang gracefully.

Some of the smaller climbers can be grown in hanging baskets, where they will trail elegantly down rather than climb up. The beautiful Caroli-

na jasmine *Gelsemium sempervirens*, with its strongly scented yellow flowers, can be grown this way.

Hoya bella, one of the few branching climbers, has a musky smell, white and maroon flowers, a small root structure and enjoys life in a hanging basket, as does *H. carnosa*, with umbels of pale pink velvet-petalled flowers.

H. carnosa can also be pot-grown, with the long stems snaking round a small wigwam of cane. Be sure to keep these well-watered during the summer but like all other tender plants keep them dry during cold weather. Climbers in pots should be planted in a loam-based compost, such as John Innes No 2 or 3, with some added sand or grit. Peat-based composts are difficult to re-wet after they have been kept very dry, as these plants need to be over winter.

Suppliers: The Plantsman Nursery, North Wonsan Farm, Throleigh, Okehampton, Devon EX20 2JA (01647 231618). Catalogue £1.50.

Westdale Nurseries, Holt Road, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 1TS (01225 363325). For a catalogue, send four first-class stamps.

Reads Nursery, Hales Hall, Loddon, Norfolk NR14 6QW (01508 54895). Catalogue, four first-class stamps.

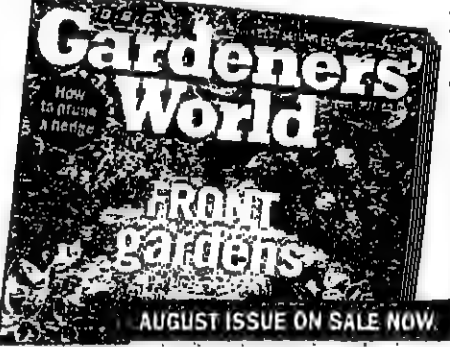
Passiflora (National Collection), Lampley Road, Kingston Seymour, Clevedon, North Somerset BS21 6AS (01934 83350). Catalogue, three first-class stamps.

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Stephen Anderton meets the fruit lovers who are fighting to save Britain's threatened older varieties



Chris Godden shows off the results of the apple grafting at Brogdale

Rootin' for old apples

What do you do if you want to replace that beautiful but ancient, and perhaps unidentified, apple tree soldiering on at the bottom of the garden producing delicious fruit year after year? How do you get it propagated?

One source of help is the Brogdale Horticultural Trust at Faversham in Kent, which is holding one of its "propagate-whilst-you-wait" days on August 3 when you can take along material from your own trees and have it "budded" on to heavy, pot-grown stocks (in spring propagating is done by grafting on lighter, bare-rooted stocks).

You can even send in suitable, strong, year-old shoots for grafting. Or you can ask for trees to be propagated from the 2,300 varieties of apple in the National Apple Collection at Brogdale.

The collection includes many old varieties, a lot of which were in danger of being lost from the commercial market. One reason for this is that when old orchards of large, standard trees are replaced for smaller more manageable trees on modern rootstock, the replacement variety has most commonly been one favoured by the mass purchasers, the supermarkets. And so Gala, Braeburn, Granny Smith and Cox prevail.

But even the big stores are now becoming interested in unusual varieties, and Brogdale's specialist fruit is also in demand at stylish restaurants and emporiums such as Fortnum and Mason, in London. Brogdale has survived over the years by the skin of its teeth. It began life in 1924 as a joint fruit enterprise between the Government and the Royal Horticultural Society, and in the 1950s became a

solely Government-funded fruit trialling station. Mainly because of the interest of the first director, "Jock" Potter, apples were collected on the 150-acre site. There were also collections of old varieties of pears, cherries, plums, currants, gooseberries, strawberries, nuns, medlars and vines.

The Government closed Brogdale in 1990, saying that the collections of old varieties were non-commercial. The neighbouring East Malling Research Station, working on fruit development, regarded the Brogdale collections as a health hazard rather than a valuable gene pool. Finally, and after serious questions in high places, the Brogdale Horticultural Trust was set up in 1991, buying out the land and collections from the Government with both private and local authority funding.

Today the trust operates as a small-scale commercial fruit farm and, with some help from the Government, maintains and promotes the National Fruit Collection which, because of previous planting, specialises in apples and pears. The apple collection includes eating, cooking and cider apples, and the trust supplies propagation material to nurseries as well as private individuals.

Promotional work includes regular tours of the collections, at which Chris Godden deals with pruning, grafting and orchard practice (with a helper, Mr Godden can graft 25,000 buds on to rootstocks in six weeks).

There are also demonstration days when the attraction of apples in blossom, in fruit, and in the mouth are presented. The trust also has a postal fruit-naming service,



One of most beautiful sights of spring, an old apple orchard in full blossom, has become a rare sight. But the Brogdale Trust is encouraging a return to older varieties

at £10 a sample — invaluable for people who are not RHS members and cannot use its scheme.

But is it possible to name all the thousands of fruits sent to Brogdale? David Pennell, the director of horticulture, reckons to be able to get extremely close, or to at least narrow a sample down to two or three choices.

Some are obvious. Others are almost impossible. Yet others may be simply good seedling apples." Dr Pennell says, "We can only make a judgment on the sample we receive, and that depends so much on the vigour of the tree. Old trees often carry untypically small fruit."

Dr Pennell regards most of the old varieties in the collection as perfectly acceptable garden apples, and would like to see more grown on a commercial scale. "They are nearly all easier to grow than a Cox, after all," he says, and is not willing to see the EU regulations on size blamed for the loss of old varieties in commerce: the apples have only to be at or above a certain

size "typical for the variety", he explains. More important to growers are a high yield from young trees and a good demand for the variety. So "Ashmead's Colonel", for instance, will only ever produce 70 per cent of the volume of crop produced by a Cox. But to a gardener, volume is rarely significant. It is more important to have early and late varieties to avoid a glut, a range of flavours, and good clean stock on manageable sized trees. All of this is possible with old varieties on modern stocks.

At Penbridge in Herefordshire, the family firm of Dunkerton's Cider cannot get enough of the old varieties of cider apple to press. The firm presses 20 different varieties in an average season, and can make a single-variety pressing from as little as half a ton.

The value of the old varieties is not just in single variety sales but in

blending. The firm is always on the look-out at cottage orchards for "Collington Big Bitters" and the very acidic "Foxwhelp". Meanwhile, the firm is planting new orchards of "Sheep's Nose", and "White Norman" valued for its heavy tannin. For Dunkerton is convinced that there are plenty of small old orchards remaining in Herefordshire, but that many of the trees are virtually unidentifiable. He has to chase hard and wide to find the fruit he wants, and says: "It does not help that the useful books on cider apples, such as Hogg

and Bull's *Herefordshire Pomona* of 1876, go to collectors at specialist auctions for £5,000 to £6,000. Most people who have an old orchard cannot afford that."

At least Brogdale can help to keep going some of these useful old varieties. But which old varieties ought a gardener to be planting?

Dr Pennell admits that even today, there is a wide choice, albeit from a very few sources. "The tree has to suit the garden and the gardener. I tell everyone to think first about what kinds of apple they like, how far north they live and what the soil is like, and whether they want early or late apples."

It is only after narrowing down the field of choice that you can start to decide between a "Nex Flax" and a "Neld's Drooper".

Full details of the propagation and fruit-naming schemes are available from the Brogdale Horticultural Trust, Brogdale Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XZ (01795 535266/335462).

The following books are a good source of information on old varieties: *The Book of Apples*, by Joan Morgan and Alison Richards (Ebury Press, £22.50), lists and describes the Brogdale collection. *The Fruit and Vegetable Finder*, £7.99 from *The Organic Gardening Catalogue*, Coombe Lane House, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 1HY (01832 829233), is in its fifth, and possibly last, edition. Best to snap up any copies you see.

'The big stores are becoming interested in unusual varieties'

WEEKEND TIPS

- Divide clumps of autumn-flowering colchicum bulbs before the summer rest is over and flower growth is induced by autumn rain. Single bulbs in grass or borders will soon build up again into clumps.
- Take cuttings of pinks, setting 3in-long shoots around the inside of a pot of sandy compost.
- Pelargoniums at the end of their flowering period may be rested for a few weeks with little water, before starting into growth again.
- Liquid-feed cucumbers, tomatoes and courgettes regularly.
- Ensure that all fruit trees do not lack water.
- Stake brussels sprouts in windy gardens. Spray potatoes for blight.

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Create a little bit of paradise in Battersea

We are sipping coffee in a desert-like area dotted with succulents and the spiky grey forms of agaves, set off by splashes of vivid orange on the surrounding walls and a brightly coloured "Bedouin tent" of purple, green and yellow which gives a little respite from the heat.

It is dramatic and exotic and feels like California or Italy. But we are across the road from Battersea Park, south-west London, in a small garden owned by an Italian thriller writer, Loretta Napoleoni, and her City trader husband, Ron Gerson, who have two sons, Alexander, nine, and Julian, four.

They moved here three years ago and, unusually, started on the garden before redesigning the house. "I did not want an English garden of lots of little flowers," Ms Napoleoni says. "I was brought up in Rome and wanted a subtropical garden, but I am not a gardener and so I had to find someone to do it. This was difficult: I tried lots of people and then I read about a company called Avant Gardener and asked them to look at the garden. James Fraser came, and spent a long time here before coming up with this plan. We love it."

The garden had been typically English, with masses of roses, and a wartime Anderson air-raid shelter at its centre. For £12,000 it has been transformed into a subtropical paradise.

The wind blizzed in from a wide open area to one side of the house, which is next door to the drive and the roof garden of an old people's

Jane Owen discovers a dramatic taste of the exotic — in the heart of London

home, so trellis was erected and covered with climbers enclosing three sides of the garden — not the usual garden centre trellis, but horizontal wooden battens discreetly nailed to uprights. It is clothed in roses, golden hop, the evergreen clematis *arnaudii*, *Actinidia chinensis*, honey-suckle and the purple-flowered *Solanum crispum*. Gloomy concrete stairs which plunge down into the



Designer James Fraser

defunct air-raid shelter have been painted orange to match the end wall of the house and a side wall, which has a door leading through to next door.

The remaining cavity of the shelter is now the garden shed. Above it, decking steps and walkways lead up several levels to a top deck with a mosaic-pillared drinks table and a chair. Halfway up the decking a panel of greeny-blue diamond trellis framed in black makes a balustrade and a focal point above the orange-painted stairwell.

The garden faces south and west, so the main sitting area, at the lowest point of the garden where the family eats al fresco and entertains, is a heathy suntrap. It is floored with huge irregular pieces of dark grey Welsh slate, which show off the low-growing crack fillers: woolly thyme, sedum, sempervivums and the New Zealand ground cover *Raoulia* which is tough enough to walk on.

In the surrounding beds there is a curious mixed planting of euphorbias, iris, bamboo, cow parsley, *Alchemilla mollis* and the small plant *Chamaejasme*.

A large bed above the well of the garden and to the side of the deck has a white barked gum tree *Eucalyptus parvifolia*, some maize (which the children pick and eat), the grey-leaved, sweetly scented pineapple broom, purple pom-poms of alliums, bamboos, and great clumps of specialist grasses — bluey-green *Festuca glauca*, *Carex testacea*, *Stipa arundinacea* and *S. gigantea*.

The garden is not yet complete and the next stage involves transforming the dull



Loretta Napoleoni and children in the subtropical garden

side passage into a jungle planting of waxy *Arbutus x andrachnoides* and black bamboo, with grey slate stepping stones. The planting will envelop a large conservatory.

Candles in glass holders are held high by iron spikes and these are supplemented by low-voltage uplights dotted in the beds to highlight plants. A computer-controlled automatic watering system has also been installed.

In line with Ms Napoleoni's brief, the garden has been designed to be so low in maintenance that it needs only four visits a year by Avant Gardener.

Mr Fraser, a New Zealand-er with a background in subtropical fruit growing who has been landscaping since he arrived in Britain in 1984, says: "I work for a lot of people who have neither the time nor the knowledge to keep things

going, so when I build a garden that is just a beginning. But if a client is involved in the maintenance I may need to come back only twice a year. "I have my own nursery where I grow on a lot of the plants that I import directly from New Zealand. Good planting is a key to good design and that depends on having the right plants and a good soil."

"Usually in London gardens, the soil is exhausted and has to be replaced but, in Loretta Napoleoni's garden, it was high quality. I try to be organic, but I sometimes use a little pesticide if I get a sudden aphid bloom or something," says the man who, on one occasion, spent a morning in Ms Napoleoni's garden squashing caterpillars by hand.

James Fraser, Avant Gardener, 10 Windsor Road, London SW11 3HE (0171-478 4253).

'I am beginning to wonder whether music connects directly with the very young in a way that is lost to us as we get older'

Enthralled by the power of music

LIFE AND SOUL



GINNY DOUGARY

Luciano Pavarotti has been awarded the same saintly status by the junior males of our household as Rudolph Gullit. Ever since the boys saw the Three Tenors on telly some years ago, they have decided that "Pav is cool" and a night at the opera is a treat on a par with an afternoon at Chelsea.

Adoration, as far as the six-year-old is concerned, is most definitely blind. We once made the mistake of referring to his new hero's height and he went ballistic. "Pavarotti's not fat, you blots," he bellowed, employing one of his more belligerent self-coined profanities. "And, anyway, don't be so fat-ist," his older brother added sanctimoniously. Their parents, as so often happens these days, in the face of their children monopolising the moral high ground on everything from smoking to pollution, retreated into shamed-faced silence.

A few months ago, my mother — keen to score her first goal for high culture — booked us all into the front row of the Coliseum to see *Madame Butterfly*. The last English-language opera I had seen was Strauss's *Elektra*. I was 19 and it was

not an enjoyable experience. The stage was dominated by a vast pair of scrap metal legs, against which various howling, hysterical women hurled themselves, singing such bathetic lines as "I've got a headache" and "get me a handkerchief". I'm ashamed to say that I giggled all the way through it.

But *Butterfly* is thankfully a far cry from *Elektra*. It was Susan Bullock's performance which got to me — her Cio-San is so sweetly convincing, without the showy "pretend" acting which can make opera rather disengaging — but the children were moved by the whole event. There had been some anxious looks when we took our seats, the boys being the youngest members of the audience by a fair few decades. But as soon as the orchestra struck up, they were entranced and remained so for the rest of the evening.

I am beginning to wonder whether

music connects directly with the very young in a way that is lost to us as we get older. I have watched the boys watching *Young Musician of the Year* or even something quite difficult like Jonathan Miller's *Don Giovanni* on the box, and been struck by their absorption.

Their music teacher is — to use his pupils' highest accolade — "wicked". Here is a groovy young man with multiple earrings, a scary haircut and eco-warrior sensibilities who devotes a great deal of his own time and energy to composing music for school productions.

Like all inspirational teachers, he has opened a door for the children, enabling even the most deprived among them to glimpse something bright and beautiful and enriching.

Our nine-year-old son was dismayed by the news that his favourite teacher was leaving. His own interest in music was sparked during a long hot summer in France with a delightful 15-year-old girl whose grandfather had been Elgar's amanuensis.

It was a scorching afternoon and we had retreated from the sun into the cool

indoors, when we suddenly became aware of a waterfall of music cascading down the corridor. Lottie had intruded into the owner's living room and, seeing a piano, had been unable to resist the urge to play. Enchanted by the sound, our son went off to investigate and insisted that I come along. He watched and listened and bombarded poor Lottie with questions. At some point in the inquisition, he discovered that the lovely sounds she was making had come out of her own head.

Six months of piano lessons hadn't prepared him for this. Boing! It was like one of those cartoons when a lightbulb flashes above the character, as our son realised that you didn't have to be some historical figure in a frock-coat and pompadour to compose music. You just had to do it. And do it, aged five — to our astonishment, since

his parents don't have a musical bone between them — he did.

For the past two years, he has been studying music at the Guildhall School. At the end of one term, the director of the prep department asked the parents to stay behind. It had just been announced that local government funding for children whose parents could not afford the sizeable fees was to be withdrawn. She was dismayed by the idea that this centre of musical excellence would now be available only to the privileged few, and took it upon herself to set up a fund so that other children would be given the same opportunity to flourish as ours.

She once taught music to a boy who was so lacking in educational skills that he could barely read or write. Had he not been offered a passport for escape, he would almost certainly have been condemned to the ranks of the unemployed. During his years at Guildhall, his confidence and musicianship soared. He is now a leading member of the Covent Garden orchestra — so could we please give generously? The next time we have a night at the opera, I'll be thinking of him.



Right royal revelations: Using a boat borrowed from Mohamed Al Fayed, Diana, Princess of Wales, has a full and frank conversation with members of the press in St Tropez

Those rats around the royals

It used to be a scoop for a reporter to get a quote from royalty. Nowadays, as veteran Diana-watchers told Simon Freeman, it has all gone too far

Andrew Morton had planned to spend the week tidying up the final draft of his biography of President Moi, the beleaguered Kenyan leader, which has taken him more than two years to write. But then Diana, Princess of Wales, the woman who turned Morton from a tabloid pundit on the royals into a multi-millionaire celebrity, intervened and he was asked yet again for comment.

In St Tropez on Monday, after zooming around on a jet-ski in a leopard-print swimsuit, the Commandant of a speedboat moored off the villa of Mohamed Al Fayed, owner of Harrods, the London store. He has been entertaining the princess and her sons, William and Harry. She steered past the boats manned by the continental paparazzi, whom she does not like, and headed towards a launch, hired by the elite royal specialists of the *The Mirror*, *The Sun* and *Daily Mail* to monitor her activities that day, and gave what, even by her eccentric standards, was an extraordinary press conference.

She gripped the hand-rail and told them they could not take pictures. But that did not matter, since other photographers were snapping away. With the story of how her sons believed she should leave Britain, the next day's papers carried an unusual picture of the working conditions of the royal rat pack.

The boat they had hired for about £1,000 per day was far superior to Diana's, according to Andrew Bray, Editor of *Yachting World*. But with such sensational news under their belts these particular journalists could afford to indulge themselves a little.

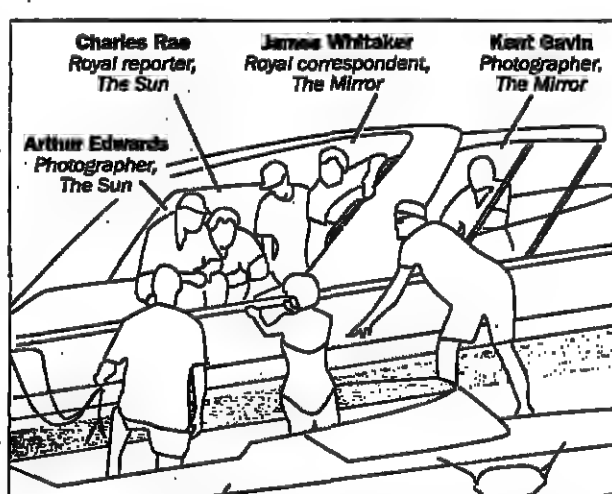
However, Morton, whose book *Diana: Her True Story* has sold about five million copies around the world in 20 languages, does not seem to envy today's royal reporters. "The best days have gone. In the 1980s, when I was covering the royals full-time, the royal specialists on the tabloids were like white knights, going out to do battle every day for their

editors. Every story we wrote made headlines around the world."

Harry Arnold, chief reporter on *The Mirror*, who was *Sun* royal correspondent for 15 years and broke the story of the Prince of Wales's romance with Lady Diana Spencer, agrees. "It's not as much fun as it used to be. In the heyday Charles and Diana had a sense of humour. We used to swap jokes. He called us scum, but we would retort that we were la crème de la scum."

Arnold relates the story of a trip to New Delhi when his photographer Arthur Edwards injured his back. "We had to get to the British High Commission where the Prince of Wales was holding a function. Arthur couldn't move and there were no taxis, so we found a tourist elephant decorated with pastel chalks. A ladder led up to the howdah."

They clambered on board in dinner jackets, but there was no ladder to help them dismount at the High Commission.



sion. "I slid down the trunk and got covered in chalk. Arthur dismounted via the car but fell on to his back on the ground just as the Prince arrived." Charles related the incident with relish for days.

Royal reporters endured a heavy responsibility because they had to provide regular,

Whitaker, Kent Gavin and Edwards — travelled the world on unlimited expenses. In Nairobi, when the Queen was revisiting Trepoze game lodge, Edwards remarked that one of his colleagues' hotel bills resembled a Beach Boys song sheet: "Because it goes: bar, bar, bar, bar, bar."

Despite the sneers of the quality press that they simply made everything up, they were as enterprising and energetic as war correspondents. It was part of the game that the royals dodged and weaved even though, privately, they enjoyed publicity.

The journalists also needed sources: sometimes they paid for information, but often they cultivated insiders carefully, such as the bodyguard who popped into the hotel bar in the evening to brief trusted hacks on what Charles had said to his wife as they were skiing, swimming or sightseeing. (A typical nugget would be: "He was furious that she wouldn't smile on the ski

slope. He told her not to be so miserable", thus providing the headline "Cheer up, Di!")

Morton's book, however, changed the royal reporting landscape. He did far more than strip the remains of mystique from royalty; he revealed pain, misery and hypocrisy, which was fascinating but definitely not fun.

There were other repercussions. The quality press, which until then had regarded the young royals as an amusing soap opera, now thought their behaviour raised grave constitutional issues. The standards of reporting also changed irrevocably: Morton had named his sources, which meant others would have to follow suit. And, finally, rivals needed to trump Morton with even more shocking stories.

The veteran reporters in St Tropez this week yearned for the days when they would be hailed as heroes by their editors for crawling through a jungle to witness Charles and Diana sunbathing on a beach; now, they complain, their masters demand Watergate-style revelations.

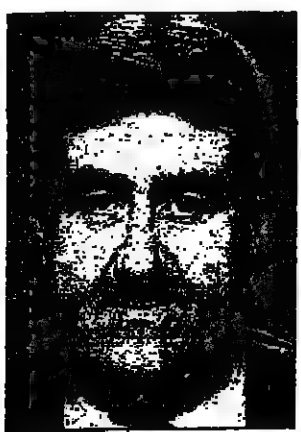
Modern communications have added to the pressures. "In the old days, you went back to the hotel, developed your pictures, and sent them to London. Now you have to transmit them instantly before the freelances beat you to it," one journalist said.

A photographer, once a feared member of the royal press pack, also mourned for the days when it was a scoop merely to elicit a quote from a royal, warranting a tax-free bonus on expenses. "It's all gone too far now," he said. "You get Charles saying he committed adultery on television, and Diana saying she has had an affair. But the tabloids have to put her on the front page because she still sells papers."

There is still hope, however, in the shape of Prince William, 15. "He looks as if he might turn out to be a cracker. He's a real royal. He doesn't like the press, and isn't going to blub to us like his mother."



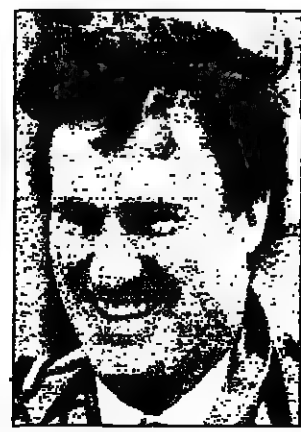
Arthur Edwards, The Sun: The grand old man of the rat pack is a well-built and ebullient Cockney sparrow. He claims to be Diana's favourite photographer. Because he "minded" the princess during her engagement in 1981, he claims to have taught her how to deal with the press.



Charles Rae, The Sun: A huge man and a teetotaler. The product of a Glasgow-Italian ice-cream dynasty, he drinks Diet Coke by the bucket. Truly professional and in constant combat with his reporting colleague Wayne Francis, Diana refers to him as Barney Rubble, the *Flintstones* character.



James Whitaker, The Mirror: Known to Diana as the Fat Tomato. Pompous, urbane but likeable. A man who shouts rather than talks, he is an army officer's son from Cheltenham. He has crawled through the bushes at Balmoral, and fixed up the Duchess of York's toe-sucking pictures.



Kent Gavin, The Mirror: Known to his friends as Gavers. He is another Cockney, though quieter and more enigmatic than Edwards. They claim to be rivals, but are in private the best of friends, frequently helping each other out. His friends claim he has had many private conversations with Diana.

Down in the engine room

Ruth Gledhill joins the monks at Ampleforth for Holy Mass



THE PURE, soft Gregorian chant of the *Sanctus* filtered through the arched altar canopy and the gently domed choir. The novices, young men in their twenties, sat in black cowl and habit as the congregation, mostly visitors, retreatants and local parishioners, drank in the beatific atmosphere of Ampleforth Abbey.

The monks' chanting has been recorded in perpetuity on CD. *Vision of Peace* is about to win them a silver disc, having sold 60,000 since its launch in 1995. But here, the chanting, led by Brother Laurence, was not in aid of record sales but of a weekday Mass, the daily eucharist which underpins the life of the abbey and its school next door.

Ampleforth defies perceived convention in that it has a community of 100 monks, plus a healthy annual influx of young novices. Many work in local parishes or abroad. Of the 40 resident monks, most were in Lourdes where the new Abbot, Fr Timothy, 54, who was elected in March, is spiritual director to pilgrims. But the novices remain in the monastery throughout the summer.

Our celebrant was Fr Paulinus, in his second year in the novitiate and formerly a parish priest in Liverpool. The church was bare with few statues. There was no incense, or Stations of the Cross, and just two strokes of the bell at the Consecration.

FR PAULINUS said the "grace" and prayed for "purity and strength" as we prepared to celebrate. We confessed our sins, and prayed that we might follow the example of St Bonaventure, the 13th-century Franciscan whose feast day it was. Brother Columba, who paints icons in the traditional Orthodox style, read from Exodus and Brother Kentigern read from Matthew. Fr Paulinus preached. "The miracles of Jesus invited faith, but very often they provoked the opposite." He asked why this gift was rejected. "Our hearts are very complex and easily deceived. Faith is

essentially simple and seeks out the child-like."

The Catholicism we were enjoying dates back in unbroken line to before the Reformation. The abbey's alumni are at the heart of the British establishment. Cardinal Basil Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, was formerly abbot here. Famous old boys include Frank Muir, Piers Paul Read, Lord Nolan and Philip Lawrence.

It is no coincidence that the Rule of St Benedict, on which the monks model their lives, is today being adapted by some multinational companies as the latest modern management formula. Ampleforth is an example of how the ancient Benedictine model of community life, one based on spiritual values, can give rise to a thriving, vital and profitable entity.

The school, founded in 1812, has about 600 boy pupils. More than 10,000 visitors stay overnight at Ampleforth each year, many on retreats under the spiritual direction of the monks. The abbey is the biggest local employer, with more than 350 lay people working in its two schools, its dairy farm, its 3,000-acre estate and at its Redcar farm youth hostel.

IN A NEW scheme this summer, dozens of boys and girls from northern parishes are staying at Ampleforth, being trained by international coaches across a range of sports. But as Blaise Davies, formerly a member of the community and now in charge of the Redcar hostel, explains, the church is central to the enterprise. "The choir, the Mass, is the engine room," he said. "It puts everything into context. From here, the monks go into the parishes, the community, the school. The prayer feeds and sustains it."

Mass over, the monks filed into the privacy of the cloisters. The wheels were turning and soon everyone would be hard at work. By the end of that day I was 250 miles away, surrounded by traffic fumes, tall buildings and noise. But staying with me still, but barely detectable, were the unmistakable strains of the *Agnus Dei*.

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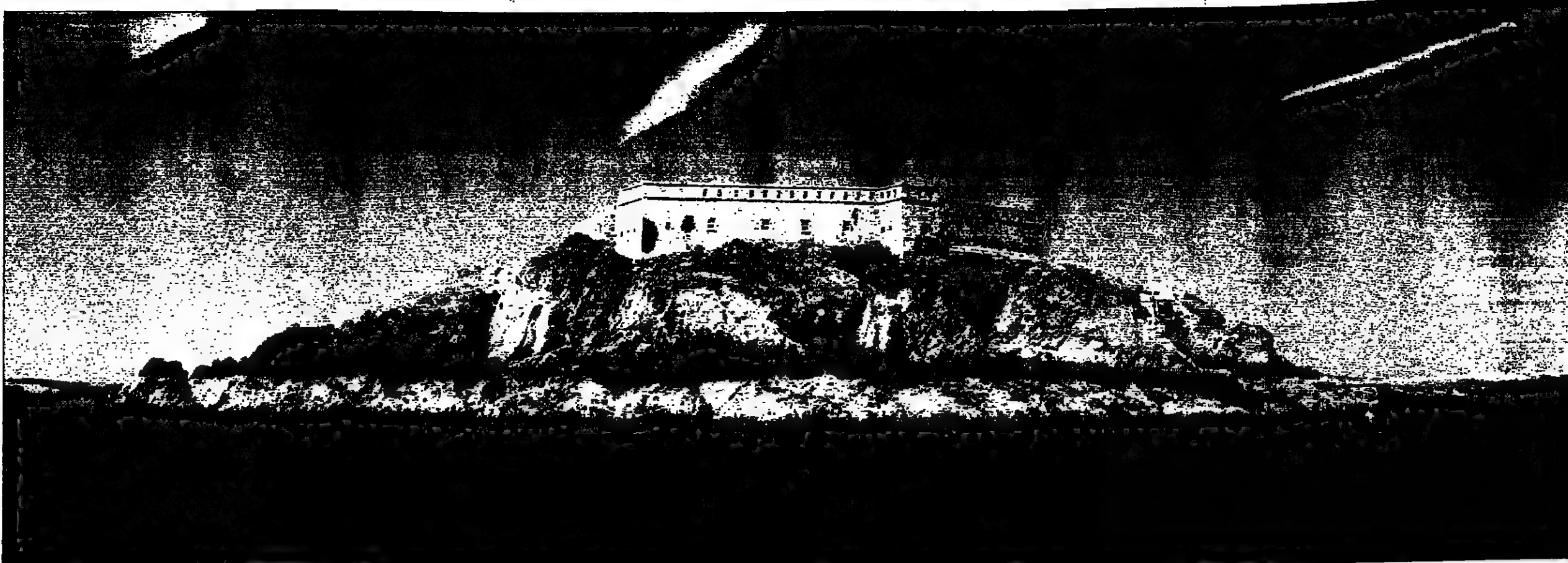
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Ampleforth Abbey: Monks at prayer during Mass

Erica Wagner visits an island fortress that would provide a serious adventure for a new buyer



Thorne Island's forbidding fortress was once home to soldiers in Queen Victoria's reign and only passed into private hands in 1945. Potential new owners are warned that ferocious winter storms can isolate it and leave seaweed on the roof

Midnight. The sky is black and riveted with stars, the Milky Way looping silver from horizon to horizon. There is no moon. Driving down the narrow, sinuous lane that leads down to West Angle Bay, we pass the Texaco oil refinery, glittering like Oz against the obsidian night, throwing gouts of flame and smoke into the darkness. Then it is hidden behind a hill and there is nothing to guide us as we head down the beach and towards an invisible sea. Everything is very quiet.

"Are you sure this is the right beach?" I ask my companion. "It has to be," he says. He's been here before, knows his way around the place, but all the same he doesn't sound too sure.

And then we hear the thin whine of a motor as Thorne Island's launch approaches to collect us. This is the only way to get to the island, whose two acres are a quarter of a mile out in the bay. At high tide there is a landing stage, but at low tide you do what we did: take off your shoes and socks, wade out into the freezing sea and clamber into an inflatable boat. Thorne Island is not a purchase for the faint of heart.

It doesn't take long to get there, ten minutes over a calm sea, just us, our pilot and a couple who are booked in for a weekend — the island is now run by owner Peter Williamson as a hotel in the summer. We round a spit of land and the island looms over us, its outline picked out by yellow light that spills out of slit-like windows. It looks formidable, secure as Alcatraz; welcoming, one must admit, is not the word that springs to mind.

The ultimate hideaway



Guests at the entrance (left) looking towards the coast; and Peter Williamson the owner, on the ramparts with Anita Lunn



But once you have climbed the 50 or so steep, slippery stone steps that lead up from the dock (not points from the *Does He Take Sugar?* team), the welcome is warm.

Ushered into an enormous, vaulted sitting room that once housed soldiers, we were revived with food and drink. Nearly 40ft long and washed with pink and white paint, the room was enlivened by a fine fire in the grate.

Although this was July, the fire was very welcome. Winter brings waves that crash over the island, depositing seaweed on the fort's roof. Winter habitation would mean in-

stalling central heating, an amenity the fort does not currently provide. Central cooling is more like it.

Thorne Island, though described as a Napoleonic fort, was in fact built in 1854, a good 33 years after Boney perished on his own island prison. It was owned by the Ministry of Defence until 1945, when it was sold to its first private owner for £50; now the asking price is £275,000. Mr Williamson has owned it for six years, and besides replumbing and rewiring the place, has installed a whirlpool bath, a

sauna and, in the courtyard where soldiers once drilled, a volleyball court. A giant chessboard painted on the ramparts reminded me just how dreadful I am at the game.

Off the comfortable sitting room, there is a little bar, a games room and a dining room, both large and serviceable; and the room that served as a coolhouse when the place was built is still in use as the kitchen.

The only trouble with its size, said Anita Lunn, who was serving the guests that weekend, is that you cover a lot of ground in a day's work... Turn left as you come through

the fort's great wood and iron doors and you find the guest accommodation. A room the size of the lounge has been split into eight bedrooms (there is another, larger one, where the guard house once was), each named after one of the seabirds whose morning arguments ensured we rose with the sun. They are spartan, as is the shower and toilet room at the end of the long corridor, and far away from the sitting room's roaring fire.

A pervasive damp becomes more evident. A prospective owner should be warned that repainting the entire interior of the fort is an

annual task, such havoc does the winter weather wreak. Old artillery stores now provide some staff and self-catering accommodation.

Rainwater tanks shown on the original plans are still the island's water supply — fine for washing but not for drinking. Two diesel generators supply electricity — and seem to work most of the time.

But why would you buy a place like this? Well, climb the steps to the high, wide ramparts, stride above the nesting gulls and you may become attached to being master of your domain. Want to get away from it all? Pull up your

metaphorical drawbridge — just don't send out the boat — and sit tight. Look out over Milford Haven bay, blue and tranquil, out to the west. It is less peaceful to the east, where the oil refinery seems far less magical in daylight.

The refinery also ensures that the island is a paradise for tanker spotters; Mr Williamson probably got a better look than he would have liked at the *Sea Empress* when she ran aground here last year.

Guests come to sail, dive and windsurf. There are dolphins and whales in these waters. The nearby islands of Skomer and Skokholm are bird sanctuaries.

Without doubt this is a beautiful location despite the refinery, but there is no getting away from the fact that Her Majesty's Government did not build Thorne Island as a resort, and its forbidding solidity could never really be overcome. Knock it down and start again? Not a possibility, for it is Grade II listed — and even if you were able, I imagine that aerial bombing would do only minor damage.

If you buy Thorne Island you are stuck with what is described in the literature as a "romantic Napoleonic fort" — work that one out, if you can.

The sun was blazing on the sea when we left. Trousers rolled, shoes in hand, we leapt from the boat into the shallows and made our way up West Angle beach, feeling as if we had had a great adventure.

But nothing compared to the adventure that would follow the purchase of Thorne Island.

● *Agnes Knight Frank* (01432 273087)

FORTRESS OF THE WEEK

Thorne Island, Angle, Pembrokeshire, Dyfed

● Price: about £275,000

● Setting: ¼ mile out into Milford Haven bay, Pembrokeshire

nine miles; M4 motorway 50 miles. There is a slow, daily service from Pegglington Station.

● Shopping: don't forget to make a list when you venture to Pembrokeshire's shops; think how annoyed you'll be when you realise you forgot the milk and have to wade up the beach again. Gulls' eggs, in season, can be found on the ramparts.

● Entertainment: make your own, the old-fashioned way. Long storm-bound evenings could doubtless be well served with games of charades and Truth or Dare. But don't even think about running or jumping on the ramparts — it is a long way down to the rocks below.



The fort's Jolly Roger

Taking steps to restore a front path

Take a walk along any street of Victorian terraced houses and you are likely to see some front steps and paths that still have the original geometric tiles.

These small tiles were laid in contrasting colours to create a simple, effective pattern. Victorian developers were keenly aware that the first impression of a property was important and that a decoratively tiled path and steps added a feeling of grandeur. They also knew the steps leading to the front door were an important social tool, because they ensured the housewife would always be standing above the milkman or tradesman when she opened her front door.

Geometric patterned tiles were originally used to decorate churches, monasteries

Joyce Blake
explains how
to recreate
traditional tile
patterns

and the homes of the aristocracy. In the 1860s, with the advent of new technology, they became cheaper to produce and more widely available. During the Victorian period they became increasingly popular for indoor and outdoor use, because they were practical, decorative and relatively inexpensive.

Sadly, many Victorian paths have deteriorated and been replaced with concrete or

covered with asphalt. To restore the traditional tiling can be expensive but it is possible to achieve a good finish without spending a fortune.

When calculating the cost it is worth remembering that well-laid tiling lasts for 100 years or more.

Jane Green has recently finished renovating the front of her house in Belsize Park, north London. She says: "My steps still had the original black and white tiles, which were in good condition, but the front path had to be renewed. I wanted the new path to be in keeping with the house and to blend in with the old steps. I did a lot of research and took pictures of similar houses in the area that still had the original paths."

"Armed with my photos and one of the old tiles, I went to several salvage yards and reproduction tile shops, but still couldn't find any tiles with the right shade and texture.

Eventually, I went to a local tile shop and found some large modern tiles that were a perfect colour match with the originals. My tiler cut them into smaller squares and, when laid, they looked great."

Before tiling it is important to check the condition of the path and steps. If the path is in good repair, with just a few tiles missing or cracked, it is possible to have suitable replacements made.

The Encastic Tile Company can produce traditional tiles, using a photograph, that will blend with the existing path. You can order a single tile, but expect to pay considerably more for these than for tiles bought in a shop.

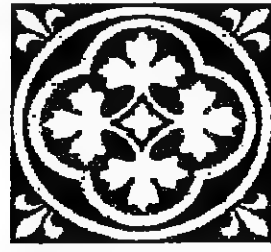
If the path is damaged it is best to have a new concrete base laid, because this will



Jane Green renewed her front path with modern tiles that matched the original tiled steps

FACT FILE

- The Encastic Tile Company, Jackfield Tile Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire TF5 7AW (01952 884747); traditional tiles to match an existing path.
- Salvo, Ford Woodhouse, Beverley-upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 2QF (01668 216494); lists salvage yards (information pack £5.75).
- Original Style (01302 474058); catalogue and nearest stockists of reproduction Victorian tiles (pictured above).
- Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society (01743 236127); information on restoring your tiling in period style.



yards in your area, which often stock reclaimed tiles, contact Salvo, which compiles regional guides to salvage yards (see box).

Modern tiles are a cheaper option and can be used to good effect. As Ms Green discovered, it is possible to buy new ceramic tiles and have them cut into small shapes. Most tile shops stock a range of tiles that have been made from traditional materials that would look authentic outside a Victorian house.

There is no doubt that a well-tiled front path and steps can give a house a real facelift. Ms Green says: "I am extremely happy with my finished project. The newly tiled steps and path are in keeping with the style of our property and please me each time I walk in and out of the house."

"I hope the tiles remain there for another hundred years and that future owners of the house will appreciate the effect as much as I have."

PROPERTY PROFILE: LINCOLNSHIRE

A weekly look at the property market around Britain

Attractions: Commuters now flocking to villages around Grantham and Stamford would disagree with Henry VIII. He described the county as "one of the most brutal and beastly of the whole realm", although his view was coloured by the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, when local peasants rebelled against his religious reforms. The Wolds to the north are raved about by those in the know, while the Georgian town of Stamford, the setting for the BBC's adaptation of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, pulls the crowds. Grantham to King's Cross in under an hour is a big lure, while the A1 provides links to major routes.

The market rising slowly, according to Strutt & Parker, with nothing like the dramatic price increases of the South East, and neighbouring Northamptonshire and Leicestershire. Savills in Lincoln quotes rises of 5 per cent over the last year for prime properties. The market fell by between 30 per cent and 40 per cent in the recession, according to Longstaff in Spalding.

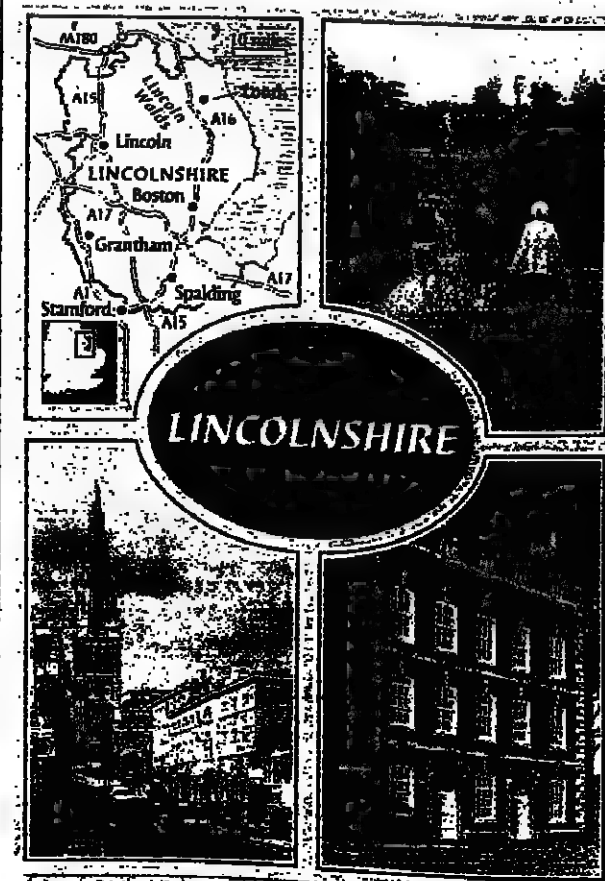
Expect to pay: prices are 15-20 per cent higher in the south of the county than in the agricultural north, according to Savills. Humberts reckons a three-bedroom cottage would go for £90,000 to £130,000; a five-bedroom farmhouse without land for £175,000 to £225,000, while a small manor house would cost from £250,000. Clegg Kennedy Drew in Stamford says it could sell any number of Georgian family houses within 15 miles of Stamford, while Stacks Relocation is house-hunting for second home buyers, or commuters, who can find nothing in the Home Counties or nearby Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

Significant sales: the sale of Fulbeck Hall, in Fulbeck, near Grantham, was something of an occasion this spring. Savills sold the William and Mary house for close to the £450,000 guide price, a successful attempt to tap into the boom in the South East.

Outlook: generally good. Clegg Kennedy Drew reckons it is a county no longer beyond the commuting frontier.

AMANDA LOOSE

● Next Saturday's property profile: Worcestershire



Ends 31st July

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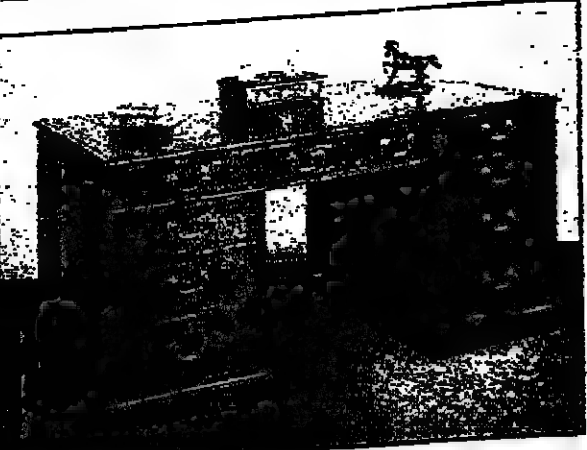
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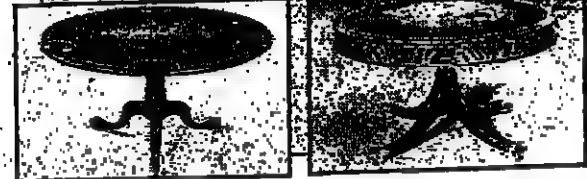
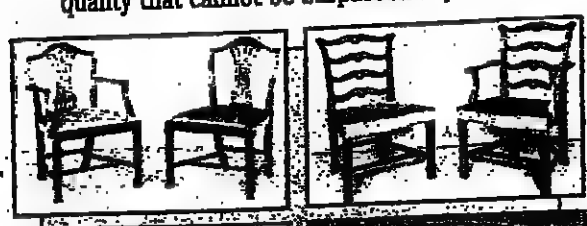
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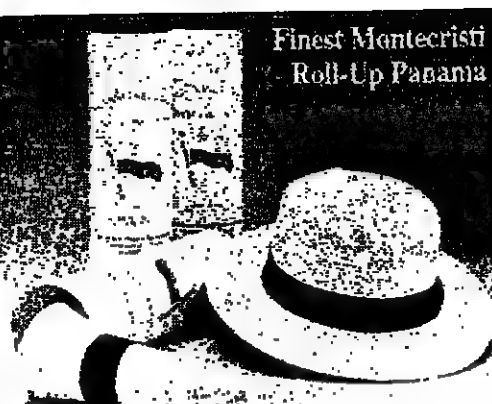
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After foxhunting, the protesters' next target will be their "right to roam" the countryside. Fine. But first let's get the facts straight

Ramblers are on the wrong track

DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

In the heat of the battle over foxhunting, let us not forget another little rural skirmish about to break out. This fight will be over a loose and rambling concept called "the right to roam", which figured in the Labour Party manifesto. It sounds good, but does not bear close examination.

I once thought I would love to roam free, like the birds in the sky, like a gull across the oceans. So, to that beguiling end, I bought a beautiful leather rucksack in Switzerland. It was a work of art, made of the softest leather, and it clung to my back like a baby koala to its mother. Now, with my alpenstock in hand, I was ready to roam: I would scale the heights, yodel down the valleys, whistle I love to go wandering along the mountain tracks... *fol de ree*. Swiss mountain holidays get you that way.

But if anyone believes that roaming free in Britain is likely to be a similar experience, they are in for a bitter disappointment. In fact, my knapsack has nestled at the back of the cupboard ever since Heathrow, and it will take more than legislation to persuade me to unearth it. I know that the hard-line ramblers see the "right to roam" as a

freedom; the snipping of the fetters of trespass legislation. But for most of us, the idea of roaming is about as appealing as following in the footsteps of a bedraggled stray dog.

Imagine that the right to roam could be bestowed upon you right now, exactly where would you go? From where I sit, in an intensively arable part of Britain, the thought of striding through, or even around, a miserable field of uniform, heartless winter wheat seems about as much fun as strolling the desert. There is nothing to see; the flora has been beaten into submission by years of chemical application, the fauna has gone to other heavens, or to virtual extinction.

If you live near the forests or moors you might think that they would provide a better terrain to roam. Not necessarily. Commercial forests are bleak places, ancient woodland is bewildering, and the moors are downright dangerous unless you are a near-professional walker. I deliberately paint a gloomy picture to try

to make the point that the total "right to roam" is no great thing to fight for, far other than the hardened few. What most of us want from a country walk is to enjoy the scenery and the exercise, in an atmosphere free of restriction, while doing the least damage to the environment we enjoy.

The first step towards this goal, I believe, would be to sort out the mess of footpaths that criss-cross the countryside: a tangle of tracks spreading like a rampant bramble bush, some of them leading nowhere, some impossible to find, and many of which have completely lost the purpose for which they were originally intended. These make for

glum walks indeed. I know that many local authorities have made great efforts to replace signposts and devise entertaining, circular routes, and have fought battles with reluctant farmers, but the policy has been based on the maintenance of existing paths, and not on devising new ones.

Some see our ancient loop-path network as a national treasure to be preserved, but I do not. It is time for a clearout. Many of those I see are just so much lumber: signposts erected because some ancient, hallowed map shows that once upon a time people regularly walked this way, from long-demolished cottages to a long-closed school. But now

the sign points into nowhere and, in order to satisfy those few who demand their "rights" irrespective of whether that particular right is worth having, these unused paths are maintained.

Landowners — those among them who see walkers as a plague of locusts — need not rub their hands with glee and assume that I am on their side. If they do, I must remind them how much public money subsidises their estates these days, and how they owe us some access in return.

Here is a suggestion (and I am open to any better): could we not redraw the footpath map, starting from scratch, on a mile for mile basis? That way, we might end up with better paths, to more interesting places, without any loss to the walker and, possibly, with great benefit to all sides.

Elected local committees, representing all interests, could agree the routes — and, if necessary, impose them on landowners — and the scope for inven-

tiveness would be unlimited. This plan will take the determination of those who valiantly fought to create the Pennine Way and similar projects, but would it not be better than the present crazy system, which we cling to for no real reason other than that it was once scratched on vellum with a quill pen?

I would not be suggesting such an upheaval if there were no pressure on the countryside to support recreation; but there is. I see no indication that the numbers of "country users" is going to decline. Why shouldn't they walk footpaths which are chosen, maintained and signposted to offer some pleasure? Better that than a situation where the right to roam becomes misunderstood, and the hills and dales are littered with lost, bewildered souls trying to get some pleasure out of their new-found freedom. And ending up cut off by the motorway, or mired in an open-air piggy.

There is not enough countryside for us all to be able to roam wild and free. The Swiss, of course, understood this years ago and designed faultless footpaths. That is one of the reasons that their country is such a pleasure to walk. It is also why they sell more knapsacks.

Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters of all kinds. Address them to: Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.

Moving to the country? Beware

Diana Appleyard looked forward to living in deepest countryside, but the reality makes her heart sink

Our old Georgian farmhouse in Oxfordshire is surrounded by fields and spinneys in which there are rabbits and foxes. My children play among the trees in the orchard and feed the horses at the bottom of the garden. Walking the dogs means only having to step out of the back door. And yet living here is driving me out of my mind. When London friends say "You're so lucky", I have to bite my lip. To disillusion them about their fantasy view of the country would be cruel.

It seems our decision to seek rural idylls is a popular one. Between 1991 and 1995 more than 24,000 people migrated from town and city into "mixed urban and rural" — that is, the countryside and the more rural suburbs. Often this movement is precipitated by a change in circumstances, such as starting a family and not wanting children to grow up in smog. Certainly when Fifi Trixibelle came along, Paula Yates and Bob Geldof (her partner then) decided to flee the city and bought an old priory in rural Kent. At the time Yates said she wanted to give her children an old-fashioned childhood, with lots of daisy-chain making and lying in fields of cow parsley.

The writer Susan Hill says she has never regretted leaving the admittedly genteel surroundings of Old Town in Stratford-upon-Avon for her cottage in rural Oxfordshire. Perhaps the most famous rural escapee is the writer Jilly Cooper, who swapped Putney in southwest London for the wilds of Gloucestershire.

As a family, we have lived pretty well everywhere. We've been townies in the heart of Birmingham. We've lived in the semi-rural suburbs near Stratford-upon-Avon. Now we are festering in a sea of green, with nothing to see for miles but the odd tractor on the skyline. When once I could look out of the window on to people, cars and things happening, now I look out of the window on to mud. Acres and acres of it.

Our family life started in an area of Birmingham spoiled only by its proximity to Balsall Heath, most famous for its prostitutes. I was regularly propositioned by men leering out of Datsuns. My husband was mugged on his second day here while out jogging.

Yet there were pluses to living in the city. There was a wonderful crèche for my two-year-old daughter. At her playgroup she had Asian, African, Chinese and even Vietnamese friends. She learnt to count in Punjabi. Theatres, restaurants and cinemas were on our doorstep.

But after a year my husband in particular became fed up. Three times someone tried to break into the house. "Enough

is enough," he said, and we began house-hunting in the countryside around Stratford-upon-Avon.

We ended up buying a barn on the outskirts of the beautiful small town of Alcester. This seemed like real countryside. We breathed in fresh, clean air every morning. The children could see cows from their bedroom window. They went to a small village school which had an old bell on top. We shopped locally and bought Barbour and green wellies, which never got very dirty. The children swam in streams, caught tadpoles and fished for minnows.

Then my husband was offered a job in London and we decided it was time to move towards the Big Smoke. But Birmingham had put us off sufficiently to make us look in the "real" countryside.

We found the old farmhouse one November day. Its windows were rotting, its heating was non-existent and cooking was done on an old, rusting range. But this was the country, and this was a real farmhouse. The first night we all slept in the same bed as the wind howled down the corridors and the windows rattled in their frames.

But we were used to the country. We had the wetlles to prove it. Sadly our wetlles were no match for the galloping mud. Putting on nice clothes has become pointless because (a) there is nowhere to go. Shopping has become a problem. I load up weekly at Tesco in Birmingham, eight miles away. Inevitably, there are things I run out of. I'll pop down to the local butchers, I think. Wrong. If there's an "r" in the month, it's closed. Shops round here close every lunchtime at varying times for well over an hour, and when children need picking up from school; every Wednesday, because it's half-day closing.

On the subject of driving, it is a tough lesson in patience and fortitude to sit behind a tractor doing ten miles an hour for eight miles, while the 17-year-old lad driving it sits happily in the middle of the road, unable to hear my horn because he has Radio 1 on full blast. All the roads here are covered in twin tracks of foot-high mud, which means swerving about demurely.

My daughters attend a school eight miles from our house. Most of my day seems to be spent speeding backwards and forwards to it, unless, of course, I am behind a tractor. Their friends live up to 15 miles away, and we seem to spend our life in the car. All our friends live hundreds of miles away, and we don't seem able to meet new ones, because there are few like-minded people in the vicinity. A visit to the pub is the pinnacle of our social life. Conversations about seed potatoes and crop rotation have become remarkably interesting.



Diana and Ross Appleyard with their daughters: "Pleasure now is a walk with the dogs running ahead, finding pheasants"

so it's not worth opening at all; every Saturday from varying times, expressly designed to be five minutes before you confidently push down the door handle; every Monday, for no good reason at all.

On the subject of driving, it is a tough lesson in patience and fortitude to sit behind a tractor doing ten miles an hour for eight miles, while the 17-year-old lad driving it sits happily in the middle of the road, unable to hear my horn because he has Radio 1 on full blast. All the roads here are covered in twin tracks of foot-high mud, which means swerving about demurely.

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But there are compensations to our life in the real country. It is possible to make your heart-rate slow to almost nothing. Pleasure now is a walk in high, damp grass with the dogs running ahead, finding pheasants.

We leave our cars and houses unlocked all the time. The other day someone left a bunch of fresh asparagus on the doorstep, because my husband had mentioned in the pub that we liked it. Nothing is too much trouble, and often payment is waved away with an embarrassed hand. You can buy things with no money — "Just drop it in later."

My children spend most of their time outside, making dens in the hay and digging in the mud. We rarely switch on the television; evenings are spent in the kitchen with a glass of wine, the dogs panting at our feet and the windows open on the night.

Real life seems a long, long way away and all would be well — if only I could find a shop that is open.

Say goodbye to a melancholy clown

FEATHER REPORT

IF YOU WANT to see a puffin on your holiday, you will have to set out in the next two weeks. There are plenty to be found in Britain, but by early August they will be streaming away from their colonies to spend the winter out in the cold waters of the Atlantic.

Some of the best places to see them are in the Shetlands and on Orkney, and on St Kilda. There are also large numbers on the Farne Islands and the Isle of May, and in Wales on the islands of Skomer and Skokholm.

They nest in burrows on the cliff-tops, which they dig out with their beaks and sharp toenails, or in crevices on the side of cliffs. No bird is more unmistakable. They are black above and white beneath, and they have extraordinary triangular beaks, which in summer are bright red at the front and blue at the back. They run over the cliff-top grass, bending slightly forward, or stalk along more upright in what ornithologists call "the pelican position".

However, the breeding season is now approaching its end. Puffins normally lay one egg, and many of their solitary offspring have already come out of their burrows in the middle of the night, and sailed down to the sea.

But some young birds are still in the nest, and their parents are flying in regularly with beakfuls of sand-eels to feed them. So if you go to a puffin colony just now, you will find a great many down on the water below the cliffs, and a few still busy on top. If you get a good view of them, you can see their



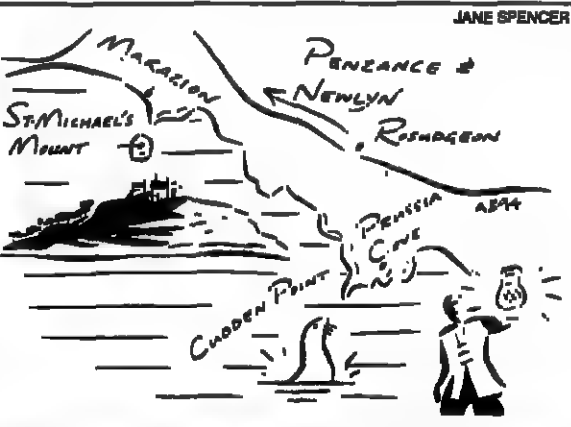
Puffins will leave soon

strangely sad or anxious faces — an effect I think of the crushed and distorted look of their eyes. Then they seem like melancholy clowns.

By next month, their colourful beak-plates will be falling off. Their winter beaks will be smaller, though still quite colourful — pale orange in front, and bluish-grey behind. By early August, they will all be swimming about on the water. Their final departure for the distant ocean is like an opera singer's farewell. One morning they are gone, and you think that is goodbye — but the next day they are all back again. So it goes on several times more. But one day they have really gone — and until next spring it is only sharp-eyed observers on sea-going ships who will see their stubby shapes over the water, or riding up and down dauntlessly on the crashing waves.

DERWENT MAY

● What's about Birders — look out for a black-headed bunting at Lundy Island, Devon; a king eider at Leven, Fife; Twitchees — look out for a young black-headed gull and common tern. Details from Birdline, 0991 700222. Calls cost 40p a minute, cheap rate, 50p at all other times.



ON THE SPOT: CORNWALL

Rural recommendations

The place: Cudden Point, south Cornish coast.

The view: I claim it as one of the finest in Britain. Before you the wide, wild sea. To the left, a huge sweep of dramatic cliffs, lush valleys and golden beaches to the Lizard peninsula in the distance. To the right, the broad arc of Marazion Bay, with St Michael's Mount as the jewel in its crown; beyond, Penzance, Newlyn and Mousehole.

The appeal: see above. Three generations of my family have taken the same summer holiday house near by for 20 years: it will probably not be long before there's a fourth to share the exhilarating climb up to Cudden Point.

Historical interest: every cove here speaks of Cornwall's maritime past. Below the cliffs to the east is Prussia Cove, named after a notorious local smuggler, the "King of Prussia". The wreckers did their deadly work from these beaches. Just below Cudden Point a huge wooden spar has been driven into the cliff top; it came from the *Warspite*, which served in both world wars before losing her tow line in April 1947 while en route to a breaker's yard, and sinking off St Michael's Mount. Behind Cudden Point is an old look-out house, built as a First World War coastal protection station.

Time to visit: any time, although the South Cornish Coastal Path can be a bit nose-to-tail in high summer. Try early spring, when the sea boils at the foot of the cliffs and the sheer cliff faces are carpeted with wild pink mesembryanthemums; or early autumn, when seals play in the coves.

How to get there: by train to Penzance or by car into Marazion (park near the beach), then strike out east along the coastal footpath (well marked); or by car to Rosudgeon village (on the main Penzance-Helston coast road), then walk down to Prussia Cove and head west.

OS reference: Sheet 203 (Land's End and The Lizard), 548275. Also near by: the local pubs are less than picturesque, so take your own picnic — the sea breeze (a quaint local name for howling gale) produces a ferocious hunger.

SALLY BAKER

الوقت في اليد



Where the
druids
compete
with cows
Wales · 19

THE TIMES travel

Guide to
the best
places to
tee off

golf breaks · 16-17



To go wherever the cargo goes

A container ship
cruise? Let's hope
you're a sea lover
and don't have
fixed holidays

Voyaging by container ship is different. Start by accepting that the passengers take second place to the cargo. You will be comfortably quartered and well fed, but the ship's rules must be obeyed and when the captain says "jump" it is as well to show signs of movement. Arrival and departure times are liable to change without warning, as will the scheduled ports of call. Allow for the unexpected is a cardinal rule of container travel.

I made my booking to Auckland with the help of a shipping agent and the ABC Shipping Guide, which details the shipping lines willing to take passengers. Those who do, usually stipulate an age limit of 70 to 80 — and even over-60s have to provide a doctor's certificate. Ships that carry fewer than ten passengers, which is most of them, do not have to have a doctor on board. And you need to be fairly fit to climb all the stairs. The cabins are about the highest part of the vessel and lifts, like stabilisers, are unnecessary luxuries.

My journey started one foggy Saturday morning on the dockside at Felixstowe. It was not hard to find the *Contship Australia*, a massive hulk that belies her name by flying the German flag. The reception on board was cursory, to say the least. I was not asked for ticket, passport or any of the other documents I had so carefully assembled.

But don't be misled. The paperwork is essential and it is as well to check out visa requirements for any of the stop-off points. Don't be like the Swiss couple who, lacking the necessary documents, had to stay on board for an entire round-the-world voyage.

Having established that I was at the right place at the right time, my steward, a smiling Filipino with gleaming white teeth, gathered my luggage and led me on the long climb to my quarters just below the bridge. My home for the next seven weeks was a spacious, well-furnished lounge with a separate bedroom and my own bathroom.

I made my way to the officers' mess for breakfast, expecting the engines to come to life signalling our departure for Le Havre. No such luck. When I came back for lunch, we were still tied up at Felixstowe and it was not until late in the afternoon that we eventually set sail. Then I was told of a change of plan. The first stop was not to be Le Havre; we were making for Hamburg, home port of the *Contship Australia*.



All aboard: a container ship in the harbour at Seattle. The passengers take second place to the cargo and arrival and departure times are liable to change without warning, as are scheduled ports of call

While my first two weeks on board were lonely affairs, supper gave me the opportunity to meet the captain and his officers. It was all very informal. On a container ship no one judges you by your clothes. There is none of that keeping up with the Joneses. Trousers, a collection of T-shirts, a jumper or two, with shorts and sun tops for the tropics are the sartorial main-

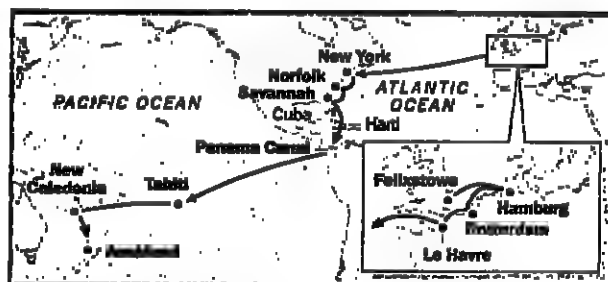
stays. The choice of shoes is important. Rope soles are ideal. Trainers are fine in cool, wet climates but are unsuitable for hot in the Pacific or Indian Oceans. There are no shops on board. Pills, potions and ointments have to be bought in advance. There is, however, a comfortable bar dispensing an unlimited supply of duty-free drinks.

Churning up the muddy waters of the Elbe, we were welcomed by *Deutschland* *Über Alles* relayed by loudspeakers from the shore. Three more passengers joined us at Hamburg: a middle-aged couple and a heavy-weight who, by his own admission, ate enough for two.

Next stop Le Havre? Oh, no; not yet. At noon the next day we were in Rotterdam, Europe's largest container port, with storage tanks and enormous derricks as far as the eye could see. Loading took longer than expected. We sailed the following day, bound for Dunkirk. But we did make it to Le Havre, one week after leaving Felixstowe.

The next leg of the journey was the eight-day crossing to New York. To ride the ocean waves on a massive container ship, you need to love the sea in all its moods. No effort is made to keep the passengers occupied. There is a swimming pool, sauna and gym — and for easy relaxation, a selection of videos, though these are chosen more for the crew than the passengers. You have the run of the ship, but learn quickly when to keep out of the way.

New York was a welcome change of environment. A taxi ordered by an obliging radio officer was waiting to take us on what turned out to be a snail's pace tour of the town. It was Columbus Day and the whole population seemed to be on the move. We made two more calls in the US — at Norfolk, Virginia, and Savannah, Georgia — before start-



ing on the longest non-stop leg of the journey through the Panama Canal and to Tahiti. Out came the shorts and deck chairs, and the swimming pool was filled with warm sea water. We saw the Bahamas, Cuba and Haiti as dots on the horizon.

As we approached Cristobal, the Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal, the sea filled with ships of all sizes and nationalities, waiting for their turn to cross to the Pacific Ocean. Two powerful tugs shoved the *Contship Australia* into position for the first of the three huge locks, which were to raise us 250ft above sea level. By the time we reached the lock gates, the short equatorial dusk had turned to night and we crossed through the canal by moonlight.

FACT FILE

- The author paid £4,000 for her journey. It was scheduled to take five weeks and ended as seven.
- The Cruise People (0171-723 2450) arranges worldwide journeys including UK-Fremantle (Australia) for £1,900 single (26 days) and UK-Cape Town for £1,300 (17 days).
- Cargo Ship Voyages (01473 736265) also has a four-week round trip on a banana boat to Belize and Honduras (£1,999) and a two-month Indian Ocean container ship trip, £3,400.
- Reading: *The Travel Bookshop* (0171-229 5260) recommends *Travel by Cargo Ship* (Cadogan, £12.99).

Eight hours later we sailed into the steamy heat of the South Pacific where, after sunrise, it was too hot to sit on our balcony. After two days we sighted the jagged mountains of Tahiti. As it was sunset and too late for the pilot to tow us to our berth, it was not until the morning that we tied up in Papeete harbour. A minibus was waiting to take us on a tour of the island. A couple from Brazil who were travelling in the opposite direction regaled us with stories of the dreadful weather in New Zealand, my destination, which was only three days away.

But there was to be a further delay. Instead of sailing in a southwesterly direction towards New Zealand, we were to head northeast to New Caledonia. The island was appropriately named. On our arrival my frustration ebbed away as we entered a narrow channel, flanked by mountain scenery reminiscent of the west coast of Scotland. The narrow channel widened into a limpid green lagoon, so shallow that even the swimming pool had to be emptied to lighten the ship.

There was more delay when a French ship jumped the queue and took our place at the quay. Our captain's ire, voiced resoundingly in three languages, forced the offending vessel to give way, only for us to see it get stuck fast at the harbour entrance. It had to wait for the incoming tide to lift it clear. And I did make it to Auckland. Eventually.

KATALIN SHIRLEY-SMITH

To float along this romantic river listening to Puccini, Verdi or Mozart sounds idyllic enough. To combine that with visits to see the art treasures that its great cities offer and attend musical performances in Vienna and Budapest is truly a cultural feast.

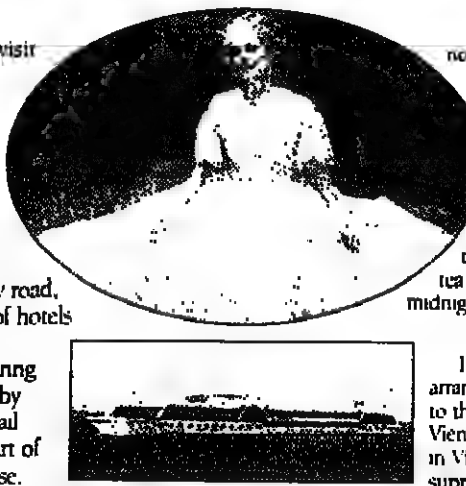
In just seven days we are able to visit four countries - Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Austria and call into nine ports including the capitals of Vienna and Budapest.

Such a journey by road, with an assortment of hotels and border crossings would indeed be a tiring experience, whereas by river we are able to sail through the very heart of Europe with great ease.

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The beautifully appointed cabins are spacious with an approximate size of 153 square feet which compares very favourably to the average of 100 square feet found on most other European river vessels. The cabins have comfortable twin beds which can be combined

into one double bed. Individually controlled air-conditioning, telephone and television. All cabins have outside views through large panoramic windows, except for cabins on the Haydn Deck which have two smaller windows.

Over the years Lufner's have gained an excellent reputation for their dining. The single sitting restaurant on the *Amadeus* will be no exception to this. First class, international cuisine will be served in the non-smoking dining room. Breakfast will be served in buffet style, whilst lunch and dinner are by table service. Afternoon tea is served and a midnight buffet is available.

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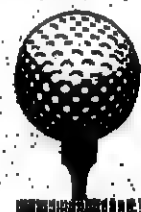
- **Harlequin Worldwide Travel (01708 552780)** offers half-board at Lantana from £1,760 for a week including four rounds at Port Royal. Longshot Golf (01730 258621) also has a Bermuda brochure.
- **The author travelled with Bermuda Tourism (0171-771 7001).**



Mid Ocean club in Bermuda, a tough course with duckponds at the 7th, a lake at the 8th and distracting sea views

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From the 16th, too, the duffed drives and missed putts pale into insignificance. Peer down on the village of Agay and the town of St Raphael; gaze out over the deep blue Mediterranean. Golf on the Côte d'Azur can be infinitely measurable.



'The view from the 16th means you forget the duffed drives and putts.'

experienced golfer only.

Royal Mougins Golf Club, back towards the Riviera, is of gentler persuasion. The pretty par-71 meanders through a valley of lakes, mini-waterfalls and streams. It may lack exclusivity, with the overlooking apartments costing up to £215,000, but the course is inviting and in no way invincible. Holes called "Amphitheatre", "Umbrella Pine" and "Angel's Dive" provide thought-provoking obstacles for amateur and professional alike.

RUSSELL KEMPSON

- For a Riviera fact file and information on golfing in France, call France Information on 0891 244123 (calls charged 50p/min).
- Green Fees: Golf de Ste Maxime, £25; Grasse Country Club, £23; Royal Mougins Golf Club, £33.

A nice bit of rough

the owners sought to redesign some holes and add new ones. But the fairways and greens are superbly tended.

It is part links and part parkland, fairly hilly, offering wonderful scenery and spectacular sea views. Many holes

Golf del Sur, Tenerife, where courses are well maintained

run along or towards the seafront and the short 5th insists you make a daunting tee shot over a rocky inlet. White speckles in the sand below show many golfers failed to rise to the challenge.

To escape the south or for a more peaceful holiday, head north where the climate is cooler and less arid. Puerto de la Cruz is more upmarket and caters for an older clientele, reflected at the Real Club de Golf de Tenerife, about 15 miles away. Founded in 1931, the influence of 19th-century British traders is seen in the cosy and relaxed atmosphere of the plush clubhouse.

The 6,291-yard, par 71 course nestles among laurels, pine trees and eucalyptus. Hiking boots seemed more appropriate for some of the more tortuous climbs, but the real physical and mental chal-

lenge came from trying to conquer the testing par threes.

CLIVE PETTY
 The author travelled with Longshor Golf Holidays (01730 269621). Prices for Tenerife from £365 for seven nights half-board, flights, car hire and golf.

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BARBADOS

SLIDING off for five hours to play golf is not always popular with your partner. But it is easier in Barbados as the perfect climate, famed by balmy trade winds, is the biggest attraction for non-golfers, too. The water sports, deep-sea fishing and idyllic beaches are not far behind, either.

Inevitably, the holiday is beach-based which, while enjoyable, is not enough for addicted golfers. So, each day off, we went to the oasis of the golf course. Designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr, the Royal Westmoreland is reminiscent of the best of British headland courses with a touch of American trickery, complicated further by the ever-present breezes.

For a change of scenery and an equally difficult challenge, play at the older Sandy Lane Hotel par 72 course. At present it is undergoing an expensive facelift to compete with its

Paradise — but at a price



Royal Westmoreland has a touch of American trickery



Lining up on the green in Barbados for the winning shot

newer rival, yet it is certainly not easy for the once-a-week hacker.

Among the dos and don'ts of golf in Barbados: do put enough sun block on to protect

your nose and knees and do not play against the legendary Gary Sobers. With a bad hip and wonky eye off a generous handicap of 8, he played the back nine against me in four

under par. As he took the money, he assured me: "I can't putt. If I could, I might have made a good golfer."

In a more profitable encounter, I played a round with Mr

Trent Jones Jr, a man so in love with his job that he could not resist a lyrical hole-by-hole description. The Royal Westmoreland occupies the site of a 480-acre sugar plantation

three-quarters of a mile above the Atlantic, and Trent Jones Jr has used the sandy slopes, coral cliffs and rocky ravines to great effect.

"I've tried to listen to the land and tailored the golf course to nature, rather than create something artificial," he said. "By using the existing features, I've aimed to give players the idea of channelling their ball into the greens."

However, there is one small drawback: Barbados is not cheap in season from December to March. Despite the strain on one's credit cards, I comforted myself with the thought that any taste of paradise always has a price.

NICHOLAS LLOYD

● The Royal Westmoreland (021 346 422 4053) has seven-night rentals from £1,795 for a two-bedroom villa. Flights and transfers not included.

● Caribbean Connection (012 34 341131) has seven nights in the Royal Pavilion Hotel including British Airways flights from £1,237 per person.



With so many golf courses now available around the world, many with top-class hotels attached or nearby, holidays with friends or partners are becoming easy to arrange

Friends are par for the course

At Daytona Beach, 50 miles northeast of Orlando in Florida, free golf is on offer. Hotel tariffs are at an off-season low rate, about £40 a room. The rub is that the offer applies until late September when temperatures climb. But 90F is the peak, the courses are at their best and air conditioning is standard in the hotels, which overlook the beach.

For information, call 0171-935 7756.

□ OF SIMILAR style is Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, arguably the

world's golf capital with 100 courses, most close to a wide choice of hotels overlooking the beach where après golf delights sate a dedicated hedonist and, because of keen competition, good value is standard.

British Airways Golf Holidays (01293 723131) from £699 per person.

□ THE CHOICE for golfing couples is growing, proving romance and golf are compatible. Stylish hotels are the key and two in Vermont fit the bill. The Equinox Hotel at Manchester and The Inn at Woodstock

INTERNATIONAL

are renowned and each has a course ranked among Vermont's best.

For information, call Vermont Tourism (001 802 828 3237).

□ FOR A short break off the beaten track, golfing groups would enjoy Dublin and Jerez. An incongruous mix, but the golf is of comparable quality, though Dublin has more of it. From Grafton Street you could reach 50 courses within the hour.

CIE Tours (0990 143910) has a golfing brochure to Ireland with prices from £154 for two nights B&B and golf.

□ JEREZ has one course but, like the hotel which overlooks it, Montecastillo is among Spain's finest. Situated off the beaten track about an hour north of Gibraltar, the Jack Nicklaus-designed course will stage the Volvo Masters for the first time in October.

JB Golf (01254 215608) has prices for January from £315 per person for three nights, sharing a room, including flights and car hire.

ARGUABLY the finest hotel in Majorca, Read's Hotel is near the Santa Maria, 15 minutes north of Palma and convenient for a necklace of courses ringing the capital. The building is an old farmhouse set in acres of gardens with 15 double rooms and six suites.

Read's Hotel (0034 714 0261) from £100 double B&B. Golf can be arranged; green fees about £25.

BARRY WARD

● The author is travel editor of Golf Monthly magazine.

GOLFING HOLIDAYS FACT FILE

■ Specialists include: UK: Crystal (0181-390 8513). France/Ireland: A Golfing Experience (0181-205 7138). France: Cresta (0161-929 1311). French Golf Holidays (01277 314574). Brittany Ferries Holidays (0990 340368). USA: Destination Golf (0181-891 5151). Tunisia: Panorams (01273 746577). Caribbean: Caribbean Connection (01244 341131). Worldwide: Longshot Golf (01730 268621). British Airways Holidays (01293 723131). Lotus Supertravel Golf (0171-962 9494).

■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: World's Great Golf Courses, by Michael Hobbs (Apple, £8.95); Golf Digest: 4200 Best Places to Stay, (Fodor, £13.99).

Tee off for the mountains

THE ALPS

IT WAS Switzerland that began Alpine golf when the European Leisure classes created a course near the ski resort of St Moritz in 1893. Now the country has 54 golf courses, 16 of them dating from before the Second World War. The courses exploited the beauty of the mountain scenery though, for ease of construction, they were built on

the flattest ground that could be found — on the plateau at Crans Montana and in the valley at Davos, for instance.

Austria's first course was built in Vienna in 1901 but most of its mountain courses, with the exception of Dellach which dates back to 1927, Kitzbühel's Schloss Kaps (1955), Moosburg (1960) and Seefeld (1968), have come in a burst of more than 60 new courses in the past 20 years.

Building a golf course on a



Natural hazard: Alpine cow enjoys the golf at Innsbruck

mountain is risky for the developer. Construction is expensive, the season is short (starting soon after the snows melt in April and only lasting until October) and green fees are limited by what the tourist will pay — somewhere in the region of £20 to £35.

However, ski resorts, rich in money from the winter, will often take the gamble to attract the illusive summer visitors to fill their empty hotel beds. For the golfer, hotel prices are at low season rates and villages that bustle in the winter are natural and uncrowded. Above 1,000 metres the heavy muggy summer air of the valleys becomes fresh and, when the sky is blue, the wind light, the views stunning

and the greens fast, there is nowhere better for golf.

The quality of courses varies. Some are designed not to frustrate the high handicap golfer too much — like the three at Kitzbühel in the Austrian Tyrol or Davos in Switzerland. Others are championship courses such as Zell am See, in Salzburgerland, and Crans Montana where the European Masters is played. Many simply present the golfer with a delightful switch-back up and down the sort of sweeping contours that course architects would die for.

GRAHAM DUFFILL

● Swiss National Tourist Office (0171-734 1921); Austrian National Tourist Office (0171-629 0461).

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Volcanic islands: Apart from their many other pleasures, Hawaii and Iceland enthrall with fiery displays

Fun with fire and brimstone

It seemed like madness to walk down into the crater of Kilauea Iki, one of the many active volcanoes on the turbulent Big Island of Hawaii, especially when I knew that a few hours away from its wet, sinister mountains the sun was shining and tourists frolicking in lagoons full of brightly coloured fish.

But the slopes of these smouldering giants are draped reassuringly in native rainforest, whose birdsong and trilling of crickets lured me into the pit and on to the crater floor.

It is an intimidating sight — a blackened wasteland, with steam pouring from sulphur-lipped fissures. Underfoot the crust feels brittle and ready to crack. Thick slabs of rock are piled one upon the other as if punched up from below.

When I stood still, heat seared the soles of my shoes. Steam and mist thickened around me, hiding the path.

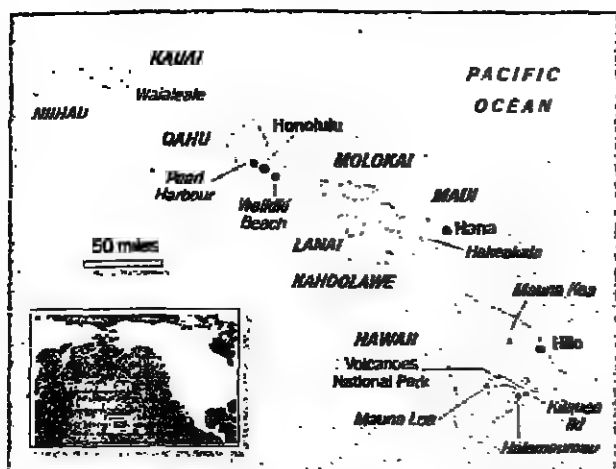
The crater seemed alive with menace. Yet I reached the safety of the other side with something like disappointment — so I turned around and did it all again.

The Volcanoes National Park provides a fascinating break from the more usual pleasures of Hawaii's beaches. Four thousand feet above sea level, it contains the largest active volcano on earth, Mauna Loa, and its innumerable offspring, including the two-mile wide Kilauea caldera, Halemaumau and Kilauea Iki, comparatively a pipsqueak, but still huge.

Mauna Loa stands nearly 14,000ft above the sea and has a surface area that occupies more than half of the Big Island, or Hawaii to give it its proper name. For 150 years it has routinely brought death and destruction to towns and farmlands. Earthquakes shake its snow-covered summit, and, since 1983, a vent in Kilauea has been pumping lava seven miles to the sea, creating more island.

Reaching the top of Mauna Loa takes a two-day tramp and climbers need to be prepared for the worst conditions. (Another behemoth, the 10,000ft Haleakala, or the House of the Sun, on the island of Maui, is much more accessible. Parties of cyclists are driven to its summit for a day's downhill ride. It is also possible to camp overnight in its crater and have a clear view of the firmament and, a local hippie told me, the UFOs.)

I spent several hours crossing the main Kilauea caldera which, despite its expanse, is thick with pungent fumes. The path took me over hardened magma to Halemaumau (also reachable from the Rim road), a deep crater within the caldera. Staring into its smoking, sulphurous maw I could not



resist thinking in fire and brimstone clichés: it is truly hellish. Upon its blasted rim were several floral garlands, thrown there to placate the goddess Pele, who is believed to dwell inside.

Such is the enchantment of the volcanoes that I found myself later that day, legs aching, having hiked caldera, lava and devastation trails, almost running in order to reach the summit of an ancient cinder cone, peer into it and get back to the road before nightfall marooned me in a

The nearby village of Volcano closes early and has a gloomy air, but in my B&B, an old missionary house, I was treated like family and the village's Kilauea Lodge provided me with the best meal I have eaten in an American state.

Until recently the park's lava flow was the red-hot night-time attraction — a viscous river of fire that could be watched from close range. In February the flow stopped, why or for how long nobody knows. I consoled myself with a long soak in thermally heated ponds and gaped at the stars.

It is wet in the volcanoes park — the nearest city of Hilo boasts the biggest raindrops ever measured. It is wetter still on parts of Kauai, the Garden Island, northernmost in the Hawaii chain and home to a small-scale Grand Canyon and fluted mountains of a preternatural steepness. In fact, its Mount Waialeale is said to be the wettest spot on earth. (These crumbs of land demand superlatives. Another is that they are the most geographically isolated place in the world — 2,500 miles from any land mass.)

And on Maui, mecca for windsurfers, alternative lifestyles and rich golders, a downpour hit with such ferocity that I thought it would wash my car off the narrow Hana "highway" that winds

around the cliffs above a gorgeous, battered shoreline.

All this precipitation is a far cry from the holiday postcards, but the beach burn need not despair: most of Hawaii is drenched in nothing but sunshine. Besides, the rain brings plenty to be grateful for. The islands are cloaked in verdancy, either as pasture, plantation or, more pleasingly, forest. Native trees, ferns and shrubs grow with primeval luxuriance, illuminated by burst of colour from orchids, anthuriums, hibiscus, and a thousand other flowering plants. Guava, pineapple, bananas and other fruit grow abundantly, sometimes lying by the road and on trails, and coconuts, mangoes and papaya cost little at roadside stalls.

The rain also feeds waterfalls. A 20-minute meander off the main highway on the Big Island through a tropical forest thick with giant bamboo brought me to a cataract dropping hundreds of feet into the mist. The regiments of Japanese tourists seen running to follow their tour leader's commands — and most other visitors to Hawaii — miss such out-of-the-way treats. The majority do not leave Oahu.

This island, with 80 per cent of the population, is Hawaii's engine room, powered by the

capital, Honolulu, and the much maligned beachstrip of Waikiki, a hotel jungle that hums with air-conditioning and honeymooners. Its urban humidity is made heavier by swooning guitars, fast food and duty-free perfume.

But for a holiday of sunbathing and shopping, Waikiki is an ideal destination. Prices are reasonable, it is safe, and everything is on tap, including not-so-cheap thrills such as paragliding, submarine trips and boat rides. Palms beckon lazily and there is excellent snorkelling and diving. Good surfing is possible at Waikiki too — for the good surfer.

For this neophyte, boogie boarding offered enough excitement, and more than enough scrapes with the coral reef. I also followed the lifesaver's advice on a beach at the surfing Elysium of the North Shore and stayed out of the bone-crunching waves.

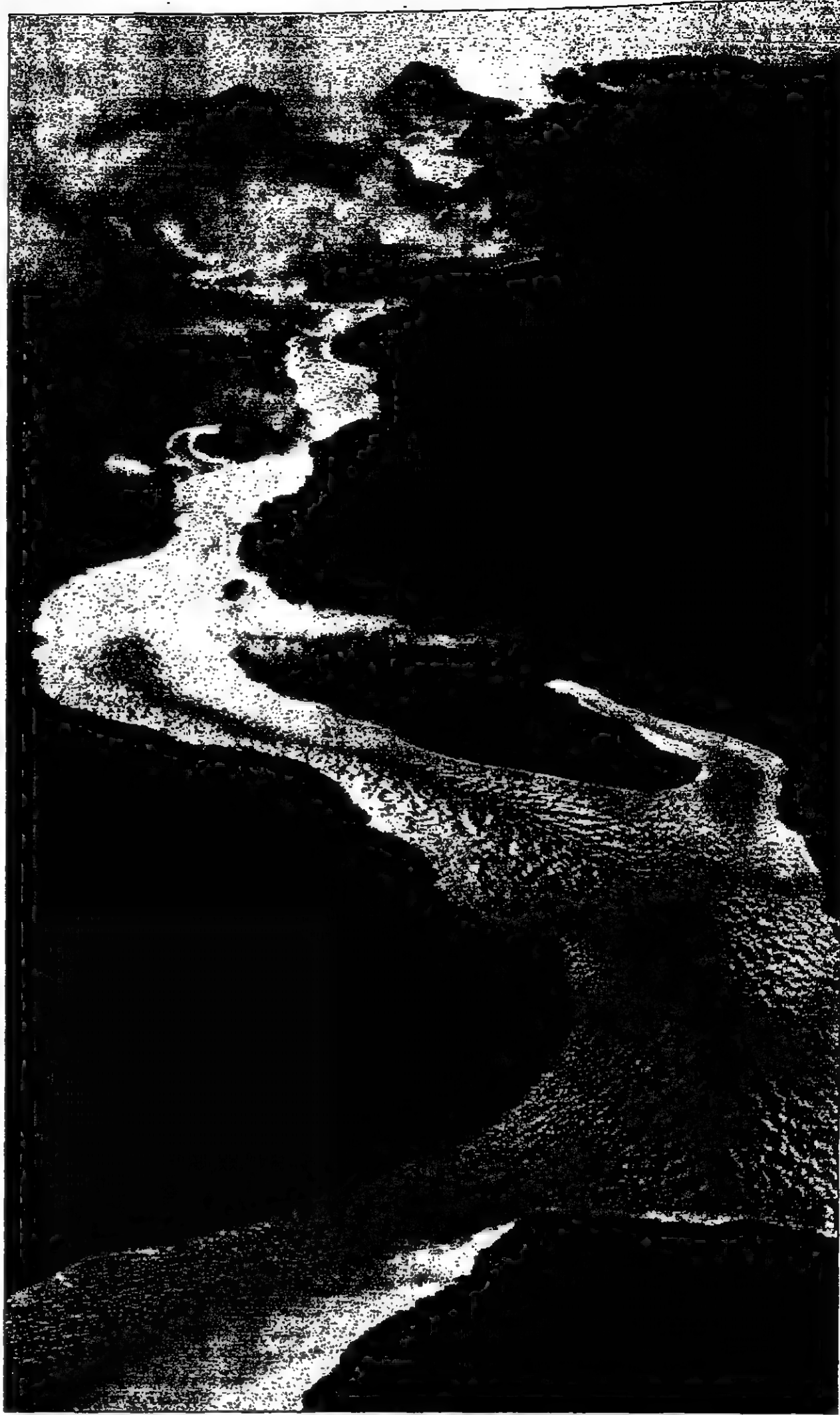
Despite its cars and consumerism, Oahu is friendly and relaxed, but the truly easy-going islands of Kauai, Lanai, Molokai and Maui are only a plane hop away. Each has its own character but all cater to a diversity of holiday styles. (There are 132 islands in all and a new one is on its way: Loihi, at present 3,000ft below the surface of the Pacific, is being thrust up from the hot spot that created the other islands and in a mere 10,000 years will join the chain.)

Volcanoes and ocean are the forces that created Hawaii and it was the Pacific that provided the other great unexpected pleasure of my week's stay: whale watching. Humpback whales calve and nurse their young in Hawaii's waters from late November to May. On Maui, Kauai and Oahu, whenever I joined the throng of people gazing out to sea, I saw signs of life. Witnessing 40 tons of blubber erupt from the sea, rotate for a look around and crash backwards into the water will stir the blood of the most blasé tourist.

DIGBY HILDRETH

HAWAII FACT FILE

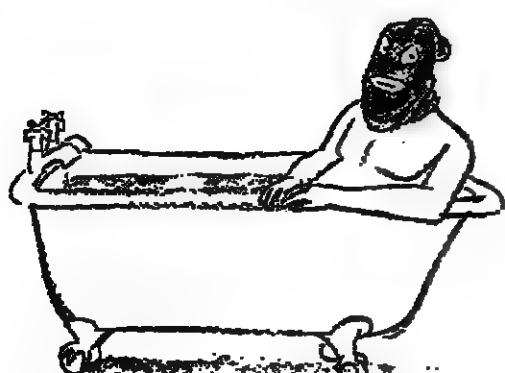
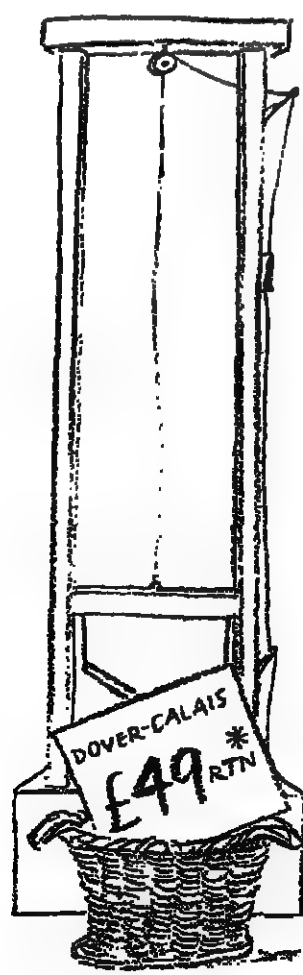
- Air New Zealand (0181-941 2299) flies four days a week from Heathrow to Honolulu from £329. Aloha Airlines, bookable through ANZ, offers inter-island airfares for £40 a sector.
- Package deals to the "Neighbour Islands", including flights, first-class hotels and car rentals are worth checking out in Waikiki. Car rental varies between islands but on Maui the author rented a car from Budget for \$13 a day plus tax and insurance (optional).
- Accommodation: My Island B&B at Volcano (001 808 967 7216) from \$50 (£32) a night for two sharing, \$35 a single, plus tax; Royal Grove Hotel, Waikiki (001 808 923 7691) \$57 a double, \$48 a single plus tax.
- Further details from Hawaii Visitors Bureau (0181-941 4009).
- Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5266) recommends: *Hawaiian Archipelago*, by Isabella Bird (Picador, £13); *The Cruise of the Snark*, by Jack London (Kegan Paul, £14.95); *A Little Too Much is Enough*, by Kathleen Tyau (Women's Press, £6.99); *Moon Maui Handbook*, (£9.95); *Rough Guide: Big Island of Hawaii*, (£8.99).



Beyond the sunny beaches, the threatening beauty of a lava flow at Mauna Loa is one of Hawaii's great attractions

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Grog on the road to Hell

The plate of small white cubes looked like rather dull processed cheese. Nothing had prepared our British palates for the Icelandic delicacy of rotten shark.

A preliminary, disagreeable mouthful left our taste buds jangling. Too late we discovered that the vital part of the feast was a fiery Icelandic liquor called Brennivín, which we should have downed to take the taste away.

It never became clear why Icelanders choose to torture themselves with cubes of shark meat which have been buried in the ground for months to rot. On the other hand, Brennivín had useful warming qualities, which we rested to the full as we stood on the deck of a fishing boat braced against an icy wind.

Unfortunately, the whales which were the object of our boat trip apparently only break surface when it is calm and sunny. To miss such giants of the deep was frustrating, though we had been warned it was early in the season. However, we were soon distracted by being given fishing rods and instruction. In five minutes, several of our party had caught fish large enough for a good supper.

Whales are an important part of north Iceland's wildlife. This, and the lunar landscape



Hot springs at Hveravellir

of volcanic rock, waterfalls, steaming sulphuric earth and belching hot mud pools are the main attractions.

Lake Myvatn lies on the western edge of a huge volcanic zone which bisects north-east Iceland. The lake is overshadowed by a 2,900-year-old black crater neatly striped with snow, but the earth is still seething with energy.

Half way around Myvatn, black volcanic rock suddenly gives way to a field of rocks hissing sulphur-smelling steam and boiling mud pools.

Volcanoes still erupt. But our attempts to reach a crater called Hell were foiled by bad weather. Thick snow proved too much even for a four-wheel drive vehicle. The more intrepid among us set out to walk the rest of the way to Hell — another opportunity to test the warming qualities of the liquor bottle.

SARA MCCONNELL

The author travelled with Travelocity (0181-427 6800), which operates seven-night visits to Iceland, including Reykjavik, the second city of Akureyri, whale watching and Lake Myvatn tours. Prices start at £754 per person.

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CRYSTAL ITALY

Travel also appears on pages 14, 21 & 22

AROUND THE WORLD: A WEEKEND GUIDE

Mangrove swamp magic

THE WRITER Marjory Stoneman Douglas described the Everglades as "a river of grass" in her long campaign to save the million and a half acres of untouched but fragile mangrove swamp and primeval wilderness.

Now, a "River of Grass" tour, which explores this unique ecosystem, is among the 40 different tours organised for next year by the Field Studies Council (01743 850522), the environmental charity. This particular 11-day trip in February will cost £1,500, fully inclusive.

"Harberton to Harberton" is another unusual tour which begins in Harberton, Devon, and follows in the tracks of the Bridges family who pioneered much of the colonisation of southern Tierra del Fuego. The family finally settled in Estancia Harberton where Lucas Bridges wrote *Uttermost Part of the Earth*.

The flora and fauna of the dry Andes, sightings of the marine mammals of the Valdes Peninsula and the guanacos (wild llamas) and condors of the Torres del Paine are all on the three-week itinerary. The tour will cost about £2,800 fully inclusive.

A THREE-DAY Carte Musesées ticket to all 58 museums on the Côte d'Azur, including the Chagall and Matisse collections in Nice, the Cézanne Museum in Menton, the perfume exhibition in Grasse and the Picasso Chapel in Vallauris will cost Fr70 (£7.20), a seven-day card Fr140 (£14.40). The cards are available from local tourist offices and come complete with a multilingual brochure.

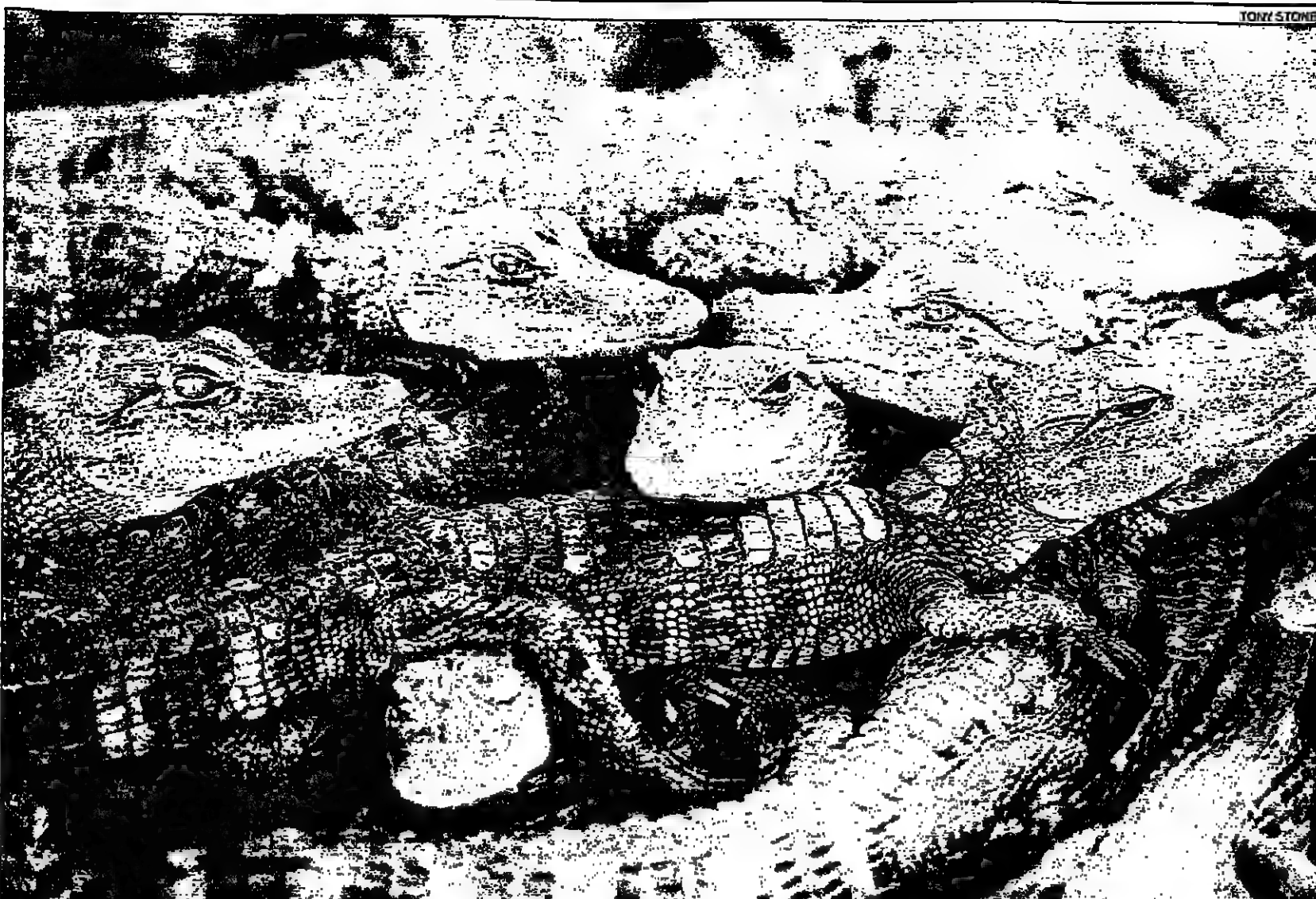
Turning turtle

WITH THE dramatic increase of sun-and-sand tourism, the world population of marine turtles has crashed by as much as a horrifying 50 to 80 per cent since the 1950s. Four out of the seven species are now classified as endangered, two critically so.

Large hotel developments on the beaches where turtles make their nests, excessive noise and light, and the use of speedboats during the mating season are some of the worst culprits.

The World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) has launched a Turtle Alert campaign to encourage turtle-friendly policies. It also hopes to discourage tourists from visiting hatcheries where they are charged money to release the young turtles into the sea, where they will easily fall prey to predators.

If you would like to join the campaign, write to: WSPA (Turtle Campaign), 2 Langley Lane, London SW6 1TJ.



Cuddle up a little closer: Alligators in the Everglades, Florida; tours are being organised to explore a little of this vast acreage of primeval wilderness

ACCORDING to a survey carried out for Visa, a quarter of those Britons going abroad on self-catering holidays from the Midlands pack a supply of cornflakes along with their swimsuits, shorts and sun tan oil.

And that's not the end of it. Sixty per cent of holidaymakers take tea bags, 40 per cent of Geordies will not leave their shores without sausages and bacon, a third of travellers from Yorkshire would not be seen dead without bottles of tomato sauce and brown sauce, while a third of Midlandsers pack a fortnight's supply of their favourite brand of baked beans with their flip flops and sun tan lotion.

Jars of Marmite figure in the luggage of a quarter of West Country folk, yet despite this love for a British breakfast, half those questioned had not had a holiday in the United Kingdom for five years.

JILL CRAWSHAW'S INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

Arctic stars



AN UNUSUAL "Northern Lights" holiday is being organised by Arctic Experience (01737 218801). It offers the chance to study the aurora borealis at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre, which is based on the shores of Canada's Hudson Bay, and observing the sky when it will be at its most spectacular.

A variety of other northern activities — such as dog sledding, igloo building and snowcat driving — will offer plenty of light relief. The eight-night trip in November will cost £1,649 for flights, accommodation, most meals and lectures.

A WINE TOUR brochure from the Austrian National Tourist Office (0171-629 0461) offers a single night in the Carnuntum Wine Region costing £35 to seven nights for the Vinarium Festival in Baden, near Vienna, for £345. This tour includes four-star half-board accommodation in Baden, and tastings in medieval vaulted wine cellars.

Elephant tour

TO COINCIDE with Visit Kerala Year in 1998, Western and Oriental (0171-221 8677) is organising two new tours to the southern Indian state.

On a special "Elephant Festival" tour next February, led by elephant expert and enthusiast Pepita Seth, holiday-

makers can join in temple festivities with their processions of great "tuskers", watch elephants at work in the timber yards and also in the wild in the Nagarhole National Park. The cost is £1,980 for flights and full board.

An independent 13-day journey through Kerala costing £1,995 includes the old British hill station of Munnar, a stay in a private home in the backwaters and a rice barge cruise.

In the swim

IF YOU cannot swim and don't like to admit it, you might like to follow the example of Shirley Bassey, Aristotle Onassis, Jean-Paul Belmondo, even racing commentator Peter O'Sullivan and former defence secretary Sir John Nott. They have all benefited from the expertise of Pierre Grunberg, the swimming instructor from the Grand Hotel at Cap

Ferrat in the south of France. He will be holding swimming clinics in this country at Hollington House Hotel (01635 255100) near Newbury in November.

His technique for curing phobias includes dunking his pupils' heads in transparent salad bowls of water to monitor their breathing before they enter the pool. Group lessons cost £15, individual sessions £40.

Opera notes

FOLLOWING the two-year closure of the Opera House in Covent Garden, London, Travel for the Arts (0171-483 4466) is offering alternative venues in Amsterdam, Munich, Vienna, Paris and New York.

In Vienna there is a choice of old favourites which includes *Tosca*, *Carmen*, *Die Walküre* and *La Bohème*, plus *Wozzeck* (Berg), *Le Prophète* (Meyerbeer) and *Gesualdo* (Schnittke). The price for return flights, three nights' hotel accommodation with breakfast, and one opera ticket costs from £440. At the Met in New York, a fairly traditional choice includes *Carmen*, *Peter Grimes* and *Lohengrin*. The price, from £698, includes the round trip, four nights' accommodation and one opera ticket.

"I PROMISE a warm welcome" is the message that French Tourist Offices, hotels and other organisations displaying the smiling tricolour "bonjour" promise the 60 million people who visit France each year. It also applies to bus conductors, waiters and anyone else who comes into contact with foreign visitors. The warm welcome will be if the campaign succeeds, be there to greet visitors "at every moment, at any time of day and night, and at any time of the year". I wonder if they will succeed with those public relations men on wheels, the Paris taxi drivers. Their form of welcome, when asked to do a short trip from one of the main Paris airports, is world famous.

Wedding bells

SLEIGH RIDES in the snow and all the trimmings of a real white wedding can be arranged in American and Canadian resorts by Ski the American Dream (0181-552 1201). The company will organise the formalities, witnesses and reception. Average cost for the ceremony and certificate is \$300 (£190).

A week in the historic Victorian former mining town of Telluride in Colorado, chosen by Bunch Cassidy and Co for their first bank robbery, costs £794-£925 for flights and B&B for a week. If you prefer to get married in Sun Valley in Idaho where Judy Garland, Clark Gable and Marilyn Monroe used to be regulars, it will cost you from £819 for a week, £1,099 for two weeks, plus the extras incurred for the wedding itself.



English at play: "I do things here you'd never see me do at home" says the McGill postcard

Beside the seaside

THE ENGLISH Tourist Board has set up a hotline number for people thinking of taking a seaside break in England this summer.

The ETB wants to entice younger generations of holidaymakers, while encouraging their parents to stay at home after years of holidaying abroad. Two good summers helped swell stay-at-home seaside tourist numbers to 18.7 million last year.

Tim Bartlett, ETB chief executive, said: "The last couple of summers have had excellent weather, enticing people to head for the coast. We hope they liked what they saw and will return this year."

Updated information on facilities and entertainment at 42 resorts is available on the ETB hotline, 01271 336019.

THE GROWTH in cruising is outstripping that of long-haul holidays, according to a report from the Passenger Shipping Association. The number of Britons taking a cruise grew by 21.9 per cent last year, compared with 12.5 per cent for long-haul.

The Mediterranean is the favoured cruise destination, followed by the Caribbean.

PRAGUE has overtaken perennial city-break favourites such as Venice, Florence and Madrid, according to the latest figures from tour operator

TRAVEL NEWS

Travelscene (see box below). The emergence of Dublin and Lille is further evidence of how weekenders are looking for new cities, said sales director John Harding. "In the 1980s, Paris and Amsterdam accounted for the majority of bookings. While still the two most popular, people are now looking further afield."

THE FASHION for fossil hunting helped Compton Bay outstrip rival beaches on the Isle of Wight in a new survey by island ferry operator, Wightlink. The bay, where dinosaur remains were recently found, was topped only by Sandown in the poll of more than 1,000 holidaymak-

ers. But it beat better-known beaches including Shanklin, Ryde and Ventnor. While the island's beaches were the most important part of a holiday for a quarter of those questioned, the villages and walking topped the poll.

THE RESURGENCE of France continues to pick up pace with record numbers of ferry passengers travelling through Dover in the first half of the year. The port reported car and passenger figures both up 26 per cent by the end of June, to 1.52 million and 9.78 million respectively.

The return to full capacity of Le Shuttle following the Channel Tunnel blaze was expected to slow down the growth in ferry traffic. But figures for June showed Dover passengers up by a sixth on the same month last year and car numbers up by a quarter.

The Dover-Calais ferry route, coupled with Le Shuttle through the Tunnel, account for three-quarters of all Britons heading for France. The market's robust health will undoubtedly be sustained with the French franc hitting ten to the pound this month for the first time since 1992. A survey of tour operators selling France showed that the gîte and villa market is demonstrating the strongest recovery, with sales up 25 per cent year-on-year.

TOP CITIES

Top ten city breaks for 1997 (1987 in brackets):
1 Paris (1)
2 Amsterdam (2)
3 Bruges (+)
4 Brussels (+)
5 Barcelona (+)
6 Rome (5)
7 Prague (+)
8 Venice (3)
9 Madrid (6)
10 Dublin (-)
Source: Travelscene



Ferry left me high and dry

From Mrs E. Wathan, Longlevens, Gloucester

Before Christmas, we booked through VFB Holidays to travel by ferry from Newhaven to Dieppe with Stena Line, departing on August 22 at 1pm. We chose this time because we are taking elderly parents and travelling from South Wales.

But early in the new year we were notified that we would have to leave Newhaven at 10.45am. We then received a letter to say our timetable had changed again. We could pay an extra £40 to use the Lynx service departing at a convenient time, or we would have to catch the 8.45am ferry, which would mean leaving Wales at 4am. A derisory £5 voucher was offered to us.

As the early start was totally unacceptable with elderly parents, we reluctantly paid the £40 Lynx supplement.

A spokesman for Stena Line commented: We changed the craft on the route and invested in faster craft to offer more crossings, six instead of four, with some sailings twice as fast. The customer is still able to travel at 1pm but we have written and asked her to talk to us.

From Brian Dennett, Frome, Somerset: Dr Dunn's article "How our weekend was stolen in the night" (Weekend, June 28) contained several pieces of advice for independent travellers. However, I would take issue with his comment that 0800 numbers to rescue and insurance services are impossible to phone from abroad. I made several 0800 calls to the UK from public callphones on two campsites in France and in two towns — the system worked perfectly each time.

We welcome letters on holiday travel. Write to: Letters, Travel Department, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN, or fax 0171-782 5124.

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CARRITAS

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

ALTHOUGH Kasparov secured first prize in the elite tournament at Novgorod, thus re-establishing his supremacy over opponents of the flesh-and-blood variety, he did suffer the misfortune that his sole loss was regarded as the most brilliant game played in the event. It is an essential component of Kasparov's great strength that he pushes his possibilities to the limit, both with Black and White. Since White has the initiative as his birthright, playing at all costs for the win as Black necessarily runs immense risks. When a crash comes, it can be spectacular, as this fine game demonstrates.

White: Vladimir Kramnik; Black: Garry Kasparov
Novgorod 1997
King's Indian Defence

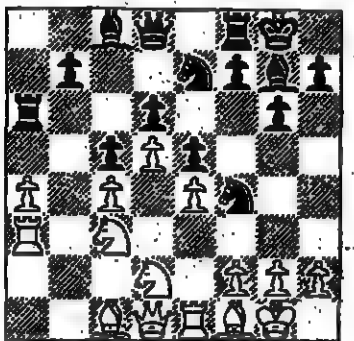
1 Nf3 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 d4 0-0 6 Be2 e5 7 0-0 Nc6 8 d5 Ne7 9 b4

The King's Indian is Kasparov's favourite defence against queen-side openings. The champion wins a high percentage of the time with it, but there are strategic disadvantages, so it must be considered one of Black's more risky options.

10 ... Nf5 11 Bf1 a5 12 b5 Rb6 13 Nd2 c5

To counter the long-term threat of a4, Bb3 and c5 by White.

14 a4 Rb6 15 Ra3



This is a novelty. The game Epishin-Ye, Geneva 1997, saw instead 15 Nb3. A deep point of White's rook move is that it can swing directly across to the king-side in later play.

15 ... g5 16 g5
Black is already committed to sacrificing a pawn since 16... Nf5 17 Qh5 leaves Black very passive.

16 ... Nh3+ 17 Bxh3 Bxh3 18 Qh5 Qd7 19 Qxg6 h5 20 Qa3 15 21 Qe2 16 22 Nb5 Kh7

Black appears to be forcing matters on the kingside. In return for his lost pawn, but White's position is full of resource.

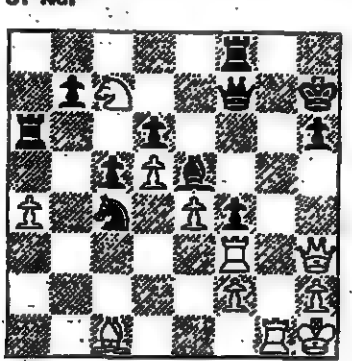
23 g6x4

Most players would quail at the thought of opening up their king like this against Kasparov while simultaneously freeing the a1-h8 diagonal for Black's king's bishop. However, Kramnik has seen that the exposed g-file is contrary to immediate appearances in fact a possible avenue for White's own attack.

23 ... exd4 24 Kh1 Bg6 25 Nf3 Re5 26 Qd3 Qd5 27 Qd3 Ne5 28 Qb5

If 28 ... Nxd1 29 Qg6+

29 Qh3 Nxd4 30 Rf3 Be5 31 Ne7



A brilliant diversion consummating the theme of White's strategy, namely that his far-flung queenside forces exert a decisive influence on the other side of the board.

31 ... Rxe4

31 ... Qx7 falls spectacularly to 32 Qxh6+ Kh6 33 Rh3 mate.

32 Bx4 Black resigns

After 32 ... Bxf4 33 Ne6 Rg8 34 Rg8 Qxg8 35 Qe5+ Kh8 36 Qf6+ Kh7 37 Nf8+ wins.

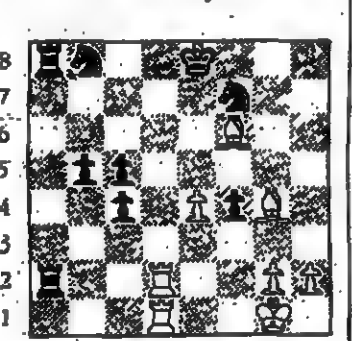
WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene
White to play. This position is from the game Domuls - Poliakov, Latvia 1980.

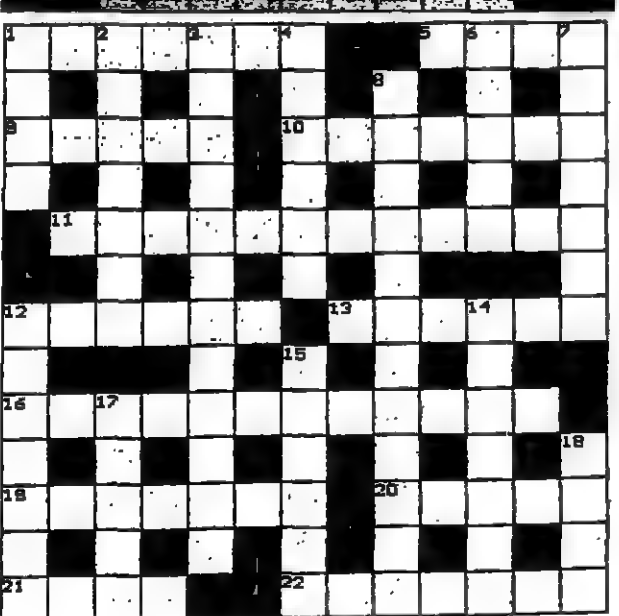
Black's monstrous armada of pawns on the queenside will win the game for him unless White acts quickly. What is his best move?

Send your answer on a postcard to The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society, which includes a free invitation to the annual dinner at Simpson's-in-the-Strand. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1 Bb6
Last week's winner: A Jefferson, Hebron Rd, Stokesley, Cleveland.



TWO CROSSWORD



No 1150

- ACROSS
- 1 Goods transporter (7)
 - 5 Voucher; young girl (4)
 - 9 Main force (of blow) (5)
 - 10 Fine weather timepiece (7)
 - 11 (US) Highest judicial body (7,5)
 - 12 Massage; masseur (6)
 - 13 Awkwardly small to handle (6)
 - 16 Tower entrance from Thames (8,4)
 - 19 Deathless (7)
 - 20 African ruminant (5)
 - 21 Ark builder (4)
 - 22 Mysterious like The Times Crossword (7)

- DOWN
- 1 A tramp (4)
 - 2 First World Cup winners (society) (7)
 - 3 Non-continuous (12)
 - 4 Carry on; US CV (6)
 - 6 17-syllable Jap. verse (5)
 - 7 War and Peace author (7)
 - 8 Derogatory ad (8,4)
 - 12 Example; design (7)
 - 14 Take away from (7)
 - 15 Prank gambol (6)
 - 17 Combat, show ring (5)
 - 18 With copper, makes brass (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1149
ACROSS: 1 Upkeep 5 Blonde 9 Snag 9 Portland 10 Duncan 12 Crib 15 Chateaubriand 16 Writ 17 Deduce 19 Badinage 21 Fool 22 Spread 23 Thrash
DOWN: 2 Pen-pusher 3 Egg 4 Popinjay 5 Burn 6 Only child 7 Dan 11 Cut it fine 13 Innocuous 14 Obedient 18 Bard 20 Alp 21 Fur

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THE TIMES

2

INSIDE
SECTION
2
TODAY

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

WORKING WEEK
Battle-hardened
general pulls off
a revolution
PAGE 27



BUSINESS
Graham Searjeant
on a dire prospect
for savers
PAGE 29



SPORT
Clarke drives
his way to
Open golf lead
PAGES 42-48

**THE TIMES
CITY
DIARY
PAGE
27**

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY JULY 19 1997

Highest June deposits for ten years as investors bet on more windfall Carpetbaggers 'blitz' societies

BY CAROLINE MERRELL
AND ANNE ASHWORTH

NEARLY £2 billion poured into building society coffers last month as speculators took a massive punt on which society would be the next to convert into a bank. Building society inflows in June were the highest monthly figure for a decade. Adrian Coles, Director-General of the Building Societies Association, said: "This reveals the intense pressure societies are under from carpetbaggers." He added: "The disruption of this intense speculation

brings is not a situation that should be allowed to continue. It is quite unacceptable that the service to small savers and genuine and long-standing customers is affected." About £30 billion has been paid to members of mutual societies that have opted for a stock market listing, and yesterday JP Morgan, the merchant bank, confirmed it was to advise Birmingham Midshires, the sixth-largest society, on its future. All eyes are now on the Nationwide. The society's plans are likely to be determined by the outcome of

Thursday's board election. The indications are that many members have voted for a group of dissident members, led by Michael Hardern, a freelance butler, who want the Nationwide to convert. Dr Brian Davis, chief executive of Nationwide, said it was pure speculation to suggest the large number of votes pointed to a Hardern victory. "If the five do get elected, then obviously we will have to reconsider our position," he added. If Mr Hardern and the other dissidents win, it is believed that Nationwide would favour a trade sale

rather than flotation. Dr Davis claimed he had not received approaches from any other organisations, but in the past has admitted that if the right offer came along it would have to consider it. Prudential said yesterday that it was interested in acquiring a building society. The society's advisers, Goldman Sachs, have put a price of £7 billion on the Nationwide - this could give members an average payout of £2,000. However, analysts believe that the predators currently circulating in the financial sector would be unwilling

to pay this high a price. Concerns about the future of building societies were raised by MPs on the all-party Building Societies Group. It is holding an emergency meeting with Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, after the announcement of the Nationwide vote. The group, chaired by Andrew Love, MP for Edmonton, is extremely concerned that the Nationwide, now the UK's biggest building society, could be forced to convert. The committee wants Ms Liddell to act to prevent other societies from being threatened.

Roy Ranson, managing director of Equitable Life, the mutual insurer, called yesterday for a period of protection to be given to mutual bodies that were the subject of takeover bids. He said that this would allow members to balance the benefits of immediate windfalls against the long-term advantages of remaining part of a mutually owned organisation. Mr Ranson added: "Payouts of £1,000 tend to cloud people's vision. They need space to sit back and reflect."

Seramble, page 30

BZW sacks four as SEC looks into losses

BY JASON NISSE

BARCLAYS de Zoete Wedd, the troubled investment banking arm of Barclays, has fired four staff and is being investigated by US regulators over allegations that it absorbed losses incurred by its clients. The losses, made early last year, only came to light this spring during an internal audit and involved trades for Scopex-Investment Counsel of Toronto and Lexington Management of New Jersey. The US Securities & Exchange Commission is investigating claims that BZW

absorbed the trading losses of \$80,000 (£48,000) to retain a good relationship with the clients, a practice that violates the rules of the New York Stock Exchange and the National Association of Securities Dealers, which runs the Nasdaq market. Three years ago Yamachi Securities, the Japanese firm, settled out of court after being accused by the SEC of similar practices. BZW yesterday admitted that it had covered the losses but said they came from "operational errors" when telephone orders were incorrectly processed by BZW traders and back office staff. "Under no circumstances has BZW or will BZW cover trading losses made by our clients," said a spokeswoman in New York.

The SEC investigation has received testimony from Kate Evans, a former BZW trader, who claimed that error forms were changed to hide the trading losses BZW had absorbed. BZW refused to discuss Ms Evans or her testimony. The New York operation is run by Callum McCarthy, a former corporate financier from Kleinwort Benson who joined BZW with Graham Pinlott, who has been promoted to a strategy role within Barclays by Martin Taylor, its chief executive.

BZW has been hit by a series of defections since Bill Harrison, the former Flemings banker, took over as chief executive last year. Patrick O'Sullivan, the chief operating officer, resigned to join Eagle Star, the insurer, earlier this week.



The Spice Girls. EMI assets but not board material, though a woman candidate is sought



Southgate: find the lady

6 In view of the fact that five of our main assets are young ladies, I'll tell you what I want, what I really, really want you to do?

Indignant shareholder



Fifield: £6.9m package

Girl power rules at EMI

BY PAUL DURMAN

ZIGZAG AHI! Girl power may have given a terrific boost to EMI Group's profits last year, yet the music company behind the Spice Girls has still to admit even one woman on to its board. Sir Colin Southgate, the EMI chairman who has been known to refer to Geri, Mel B, Mel C, Emma and Victoria as "sex on ten legs", yesterday told his shareholders what they, and everyone else, already knew - the Spice Girls

were the most notable of the company's successful new acts last year. But Sir Colin was put on the spot when one woman shareholder, echoing "Wannabe" told him "what I want, what I really really want" was at least one woman appointed as a director. After all, she said, "Five of our main assets are young ladies."

Sir Colin, who had earlier defended the £6.9 million package paid to Jim Fifield, president and chief executive

of EMI Music, told her he was already looking for "a lady who can make a contribution on the board", and was in negotiations with one candidate. Sir Colin said the second Spice Girls album will be out in time for Christmas. The rise of the Spice Girls may not be enough to offset the rise of the pound, which could cost EMI £45 million-£50 million in lost profits this year. EMI said it is unlikely to be able to improve on its UK results last year.

Markets, page 28

FTSE falls swiftly after 5,000 flirtation

BY ALAN DAIR MURRAY
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE FTSE 100 came within two points of breaching the elusive 5,000 barrier yesterday before equity bears gained the upper hand and sent shares crashing to their largest one-day fall since March.

After rising 49.1 points in the first hour of official trading, shares beat a sharp retreat, with the index falling 100 points by mid-afternoon before staging a recovery. The FTSE 100 closed 71.8 lower, at 4,877.2. International stock markets also suffered heavy losses as Wall Street retreated. Markets in Frankfurt, Paris and Milan closed sharply down.

Dealers blamed the fall in London on the expiry of July futures options contracts and renewed fears over US interest rate rises. The FTSE 100 is expected to remain volatile next week ahead of retail sales data, regarded as crucial to determining when the Bank of England will increase interest rates again. But economists shrugged off monetary data that showed M4, the measure of broad money supply, increasing at an annual rate of 11.5 per cent in June, the fastest rate for seven years.

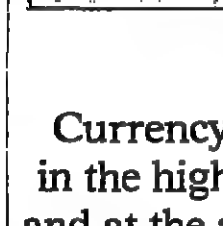
Economists said the headline figures had been distorted by gilt repo lending and that underlying figures pointed to robust but unspectacular money supply growth. Underlying M4 rose 6.1 per cent in line with the three-month average.

Separate British Bankers Association figures showed housing lending rising by £900 million in June, the largest increase for four years.

WEEKEND MONEY



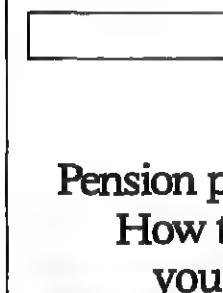
30
Anne Ashworth
on the fight
for mutuality



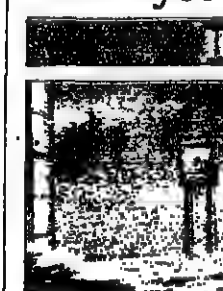
29
Currency deals
in the high street
and at the airport



31
Windfall shares
with the brightest
prospects



PENSIONS
33
Pension phobia?
How to calm
your fears



INVESTMENT
36-37
Offshore
investment and
tax special

BA aims to form Iberia alliance

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT, AIR CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH AIRWAYS yesterday announced plans to form an alliance with Iberia, the state-owned Spanish airline.

Detailed talks are to begin on setting up the deal that could come into effect from next summer and provide BA with greater access to Latin American routes. Iberia won approval for a £440 million state cash injection last year in spite of fierce objections from a number of rival airlines, including BA. Latin America is one of BA's weakest regions and the airline has been trying to establish better links for many years. As well serving routes from Madrid to most Latin American capital cities, Iberia has stakes in airlines in Colombia, Chile and Argentina. BA's tie-up with Iberia would enable the airlines to book passengers from London to Madrid with BA and then on to South America on Iberia with one ticket and one flight number.

plans to privatise Iberia early next year and BA said yesterday it would consider taking a small stake in the airline. Under the proposals, the airlines will operate flights beyond both London and Madrid under the same code number and allow each other's passengers to take part in their frequent flyer programmes. BA and Iberia hope to reduce costs by sharing some services and co-ordinating such operations as cargo. The alliance would give Iberia access to BA's worldwide network.

Bob Ayling, BA chief executive, said: "This agreement would offer both our and Iberia's customers considerable advantages, in particular making it easier to fly to a wider range of destinations." The European Commission has been informed of the proposals, which could also involve American Airlines should BA's planned alliance also be approved.

The Spanish Government

Tempus, page 28

FTSE 100 4877.2 (-71.8)
Yield 3.35%
FTSE All share 2224.14 (-47.42)
Yield 3.25% (-388.92)
New York 7912.36 (-108.47)
Dow Jones 114.50 (-1.45)
S&P Composite 977.28 (-14.50)
Federal Funds 5.75% (5.75)
Long Bond 101.15 (101.15)
Yield 6.50% (6.49%)
Smith Interbank 0.75% (0.75)
Libor 114.4 (114.4)
Future (Sep) 114.4 (114.4)
New York S 1.8785* (1.8780)
London 1.8744 (1.8719)
DM 2.9983 (2.9982)
FF 10.1210 (10.1210)
SF 2.4679 (2.4753)
Yen 193.41 (194.01)
£ Index 104.8 (104.7)
Tokyo close Yen 115.78
Brent 15-day (Oct) \$18.36 (\$18.70)
London close \$324.26 (\$320.65)
* denotes midday trading price

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OFT warns lenders about unfair practices

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

JOHN BRIDGEMAN, Director-General of Fair Trading, issued his strongest warning yet to finance companies specialising in loans to people with poor credit ratings: clean up your act or lose your consumer credit licences.

Lenders and brokers have been given two months to stop practices that Mr Bridgeman called deceitful, oppressive and unfair. New guidelines from the OFT prohibit the use of dual

rates of interest, which can double the amount borrowers owe if they are late making payments. They also ban lenders from levying excessively high redemption penalties using a calculation known as rule 78. Mr Bridgeman said rule 78 was inappropriate and that lenders should introduce caps or find alternative methods. Either way, penalties should be reasonable and do no more than cover lenders' costs, said Mr Bridgeman. The new rules also make lenders

responsible for the actions of brokers selling their loans. Brokers can receive commissions up to 10 per cent of the value of a loan and there have been many cases of hard selling, cold calling and fraudulent loan applications.

Solicitors acting for borrowers with City Mortgage Corporation, the largest of secondary lenders, applauded the initiative. They have been fighting CMC on the very points condemned by Mr Bridgeman and

expect to issue a writ for a class action against the company in the next week.

David Steene, managing director of CMC, also welcomed the introduction of regulatory standards, as did Nigel Griffiths, the Consumer Affairs Minister. Last month he held talks with Mr Bridgeman on how "non-status" lenders could be regulated.

CMC pointed out that it had already said it would withdraw rule 78 on new loans from August 1.

However, it refused to comment on the financial impact that abolishing dual rates and rule 78 would have on its existing loan portfolio. CMC contributes more than half the group's profits. All its loans are immediately securitised by Greenwich International, a subsidiary of NatWest Markets. Analysts said the bonds, which are mostly sold in the US market, could be downgraded.

UK investors plan rescue of ailing Grundig

By OLIVER AUGUST

A UK investor group led by Botts & Co, a privately owned merchant bank in London, will attempt to rescue Grundig, the ailing German television manufacturer.

The Botts investors yesterday acquired a 43 per cent stake in Grundig from Philips, the Dutch electronics group, and from Hohenstaufen Vermögensverwaltung, a German investor group.

The UK investors say they will inject undisclosed new capital into Grundig and could acquire majority control in 2004. Grundig's management was not told of the change of ownership.

Michael Handrick, a Botts director, said: "We invest in companies which we believe to be undervalued. Our average holding time is three to five years. Grundig obviously has some problems. One of the reasons is the recession in Germany. But we feel the company can be turned around, hopefully faster than in three to five years."

Philips still holds a 5 per cent stake after selling a 26.6 per cent stake to the UK investors. A stake of 52 per cent is held by the Max Grundig Foundation family trust with an option to sell its stake to Philips for DM411 million (£135 million) in 2004.

Mr Handrick said: "If and when the shares are put to Philips, we have the right to purchase them from Philips. We prefer not to talk about the price."

He said that if the Botts investors sold their stake before 2004 then the right to buy the foundation shares could be sold as part of the package.

Botts will begin talks with Grundig in the next few weeks, Mr Handrick said. "The relationship between Grundig and Philips has not been a very harmonious one. We have not had access to the Grundig management and therefore our picture of them is somewhat sketchy."

Philips stopped covering losses at Grundig this year and said that it wanted to become a passive shareholder. A spokesman said: "It is a logical further step to reduce our interest in Grundig."

Philips is disputing Grundig's losses of DM671 million (£223 million) for 1996. It said the stated losses had been inflated by extensive provisions for new policies adopted after the year end. Arthur Andersen, the accountants, endorsed this view.

Grundig is disputing Philips's claim.



Well covered: David Green, of Colefax & Fowler, the wallpaper and furnishings company, reported pre-tax profits of £2.63 million from £1.84 million in the year to April 30. Earnings rose to 7.7p a share from 5.7p. A final dividend of 1.4p, due on October 7, increases the total to 2.3p from 1.9p. The group saw strong sales growth in all its brands

Top brands join four-way sales tie

By GEORGE SIVELL

FOUR UK consumer brand giants have taken the first steps towards combining aspects of their global product marketing.

Bass Breweries, Cadbury, Kimberly-Clark and Unilever will work towards joint marketing of each other's products in a venture to be based at Birds Eye's offices in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey. Initially the four will pool information on consumer trends but will work towards joint marketing. They will take an equal share in the joint venture although the costs and the number of staff to be deployed were not disclosed.

However, the opportunities for cross-marketing are vast. Unilever is putting its Birds Eye Wall's food brands, Elida Faberge, Lever Brothers detergents and Van den Bergh foods, into the study.

Kimberly-Clark brands include Huggies, Pull-Ups, Kimwipes, Kleenex and Wypall. Cadbury has 13 brands in the league table of top 30 chocolate brands and Bass has 23 per cent of the British market through Carling Black Label, Tennent's Lager and Draught Bass.

The four say: "We have to stay at the forefront of consumer marketing, an area that is constantly developing. The aim is to improve our understanding of, and dialogue with, consumers in order that brands continue to meet their needs. All our members already have a detailed knowledge of consumers. However, to enhance this we will work together, building a pool of information of a size and quality that would not be achievable by an individual company."

Trade fears grow over Boeing link

By GEORGE SIVELL

TRADE analysts believe the Clinton Administration has a case under World Trade Organisation rules if, as seems likely, the European Commission imposes a formal block next week on the huge aerospace merger between Boeing and McDonnell Douglas.

WTO officials were plainly nervous over the prospects of a complex row between two of the world's largest trading blocks, believing it threatened the fabric of a carefully nurtured dispute mechanism.

The official WTO line was: "The US and the EU are two of our biggest members. We hope they resolve this amicably and rapidly." The statement came after President Clinton signalled earlier this week that he would seek a WTO ruling or impose sanctions on Europe if the merger were blocked by Brussels.

Trade envoys believe such a dispute would bog down the WTO, which is now trying to settle almost 70 disputes. They also fear that the vast sums of money involved could tempt either side to brush aside any WTO ruling.

A similar threat was avoided in 1995 when America and Japan settled a row over car exports. Another European-American dispute over the Helms-Burton law on investment in Cuba is in suspense.

The WTO dispute settlement system provides for final rulings by neutral panels and appeals boards within a maximum of 18 months of a complaint being lodged.

The EU has argued that the merger would create a dominant global firm damaging fair competition in Europe. Brussels is expected to take a final decision on July 23.

Shareholder attacks warning by Johnston

JOHNSTON GROUP, the engineering, pipes and construction conglomerate, was fiercely criticised by a leading shareholder after a profits warning sent its shares into freefall. The company, whose shares closed 65p down at 385p, wiping £7 million off its value, gave warning that both its results for the six months to June and its full-year results would be lower than in 1996. The surprise announcement infuriated TT Group, the rival conglomerate which made a hostile bid for 27.4 per cent of Johnston last year. It offered 500p per share, valuing the company at £53.49 million.

Johnston rebuffed TT, which still owns 7 per cent, by reassuring shareholders that its management strategy was sound and that its underlying businesses were growing. Although TT refused to say whether it would make another bid it strongly urged Johnston to sell its construction contracting business and its business in North America. Johnston blamed its problems on the strength of sterling, and difficulties with its new roadsweeping machine.

WHS buyback move

WHI SMITH Group, the troubled retailer whose shares have fallen more than 30 per cent in the past 12 months, is to seek authority to buy back up to 10 per cent of its equity. The buyback would involve the purchase of up to 28.5 million shares, which, at yesterday's close, would cost £105 million. An extraordinary meeting has been convened for August 19. The buyback would not be implemented until the year-end results on August 27. The shares have fallen to 368p, from a 12-month high of 532p, amid concern about the trading performance and defection of Bill Cockburn, chief executive, to BT.

Mansfield buys again

MANSFIELD, the Nottinghamshire brewery, continued its expansion plans buying seven managed houses from an independent Northampton pub firm. Mansfield will pay £8.5 million for the McManus Taverns properties. Their addition takes Mansfield's total in the town to 17 which it said "firmly cemented" its presence in the county. Mansfield will take control of the pubs and their 150 staff within seven days, phasing in its products and beers over the next couple of weeks. The company plans to spend some £30 million on expansion this year.

AH Ball payout fear

A H BALL, the building and construction group, is likely to make a provision of up to £800,000 for the year to March 31 and is unlikely to recommend a full-year dividend. The company made £166,000 in the year to March 1996. It said the anticipated dividend decision would be a result of a deficit on one of its main contracts and "currently unresolved issues". The company has also exchanged contracts to sell its freehold property in Farnham, Surrey, for £925,000, conditional only on obtaining appropriate planning consent. A planning application has been made.

Special from Arnold

BARR & WALLACE Arnold Trust is to pay shareholders a £17.9 million special dividend, worth 120p a share, after it completes the £41.8 million sale of the Wallace Arnold coach holiday business to management. The buyout, led by Robert Barr, BWAT director, is being backed by 31, the venture capital group, which is providing £60 million funding. The deal, which is subject to shareholder approval, will leave BWAT as a motor dealer with Ford, Vauxhall and Peugeot franchises. It is to change its name to Trust Motor Group. *Tempos, page 28*

MDIS restructuring

SHARES in McDonnell Information Systems were relisted as the troubled computer services group unveiled a £24.3 million restructuring to help to stay afloat. Restructuring cash was raised through the placing of 105 million shares at 26p each, which doubled the company's share capital. MDIS confirmed that its losses had increased to £49.5 million in the year to December, partly over exceptional charges of £21.5 million. Without the placing it would not have been able to settle its arrears of £9.5 million or liabilities of £4.6 million.

Hansom fall continues

HANSOM, the London taxi company that joined the Alternative Investment Market in 1995, last year continued its plunge into the red, making pre-tax losses of £1 million (£90,000 in the previous period). Turnover fell by 11.7 per cent, from £10.9 million to £9.6 million. The losses were caused partly by the group's restructuring, which involved getting rid of its taxi business in Fulham and investing £250,000 in Datacab. The group now expects to benefit from its reduced overheads. Again, no dividend will be paid.

Calluna drives into red

PRE-TAX losses at Calluna, maker of miniature hard disk drives, rose to £4.94 from £4.88 million in the year to end-March. Turnover fell to £2.22 million from £2.87 million, although second-half sales rose to £1.4 million (£780,000). The losses were caused partly by the development and early manufacturing of the 30MB 1.6-inch disk drive. Calluna said it would change its operating structure and trading partnerships to exploit market opportunities. Earnings fell to 8.4p a share from 9.1p. Again, there will be no dividend.

Grampian Holdings sale

GRAMPIAN HOLDINGS is selling its interests in animal health products for £67.8 million to a new company backed by 3i and Bank of Scotland. Grampian Pharmaceuticals operates in Britain and Ireland but has interests in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. In the 13 months to end-January, it earned operating profits of £7 million on turnover of £56.9 million. The disposal gives a gain of £32.5 million, which will be used mainly to fund retailing and transport developments. The company also aims to buy back up to 10 per cent of its shares.

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Expansion and change of venues for London Clubs

By DOMINIC WALSH

LONDON Clubs International, the upmarket casino operator, has been granted a new casino licence that will enable it to move its Rendezvous Casino at the London Hilton on Park Lane to new premises adjoining the nearby Metropolitan hotel.

Alan Goodenough, chief executive, speaking at the company's annual meeting yesterday, said that up to £5 million would be spent on the new Rendezvous.

He said the 20-year lease was at a rent 20 per cent lower than the Hilton premises. Industry observers expect Ladbrooke, the Hilton's owner, to consider transferring one of its own London licences to the old Rendezvous site. The reso-



Goodenough: two moves

lution of the Rendezvous move follows Mr Goodenough's success in sorting out a messy dispute with the Ritz Hotel, whose owners, the Barclay brothers, were demanding a £20 million premium for a

new lease on the Ritz Club in the hotel's basement.

London Clubs has bought the freehold of a much bigger Grade II listed building for £15.5 million, and is spending £5.5 million refurbishing it. The new casino, to be called 50 St James after its address on St James Street, is scheduled to open after the Ritz Club lease expires next June.

Mr Goodenough is still awaiting a decision by Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, on London Clubs's £190 million bid for Capital Corporation, its smaller London rival. London Clubs withdrew the bid after it was referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, but analysts expect it to revive its interest if cleared by Mrs Beckett.

THE SUNDAY TIMES THE FRENCH CONNECTION

For some people the deal has taken on a symbolic importance beyond the £24 billion at stake. It has become a power struggle between the Anglo-Saxon business establishment and an entrepreneurial Frenchman; a battle over some of the most potent brands in the world.

Business Focus on the Guinness - GrandMet merger - tomorrow

Club Med founders quit

By JON ASHWORTH

CLUB Méditerranée, the French leisure group, has parted company with the founding family that dreamt up the "sun, sea and sex" holiday formula nearly 50 years ago.

Serge Trigano, pushed aside as chairman in February, and his father Gilbert, who co-founded Club Med in 1950, have resigned from the company's supervisory board in a falling-out with his successor, Philippe Bourguignon, the former head of the Euro Disney theme park.

The departures came as Club Med announced a loss of £413 million (£40.49 million) for the six months to

April 30. Operating profits of £84 million were more than offset by £188 million in interest charges. The company, whose largest shareholder is now Italy's Agnelli family, said further provisions were possible.

M Trigano said on French radio that Club Med's villages risked turning into "Mickey [Mouse] clubs", and it was time for the founders to get out. "There was a certain spirit in this firm, a certain soul based on love, tenderness and generosity," he said. "I don't know if it will be a Mickey Club or something else but it will certainly be a different club from the past, and it's not my club. There is

no place left for a Trigano." He hinted that the Trigano family planned to launch a rival holiday club chain, addressing new leisure markets such as the elderly.

Club Med confirmed the departures in a statement thanking Gilbert Trigano, who supplied the original tent villages on which Club Med built its reputation, and Serge Trigano for "his action". The company grew to embrace 114 all-inclusive Club Med villages around the world, but fell victim to a cumbersome management structure. The number of Club Med clients grew by 30,000 to 1.4 million last year, but turnover and profits fell.

Bank	Buy	Sell
Australia S	2.37	2.19
Austria Sch	22.07	20.41
Belgium Fr	65.03	61.07
Canada S	2.03	2.28
Cyprus Cyp	0.823	0.851
Denmark Kr	11.89	11.10
Finland Mk	9.40	8.85
France Fr	10.88	9.80
Germany Dm	3.18	2.92
Greece Dr	25	22.5
Hong Kong S	13.75	12.85
India Rs	127	107
Indonesia Rp	1,175	1,085
Israel Sh	2.23	2.09
Italy Lit	908	857
Japan Yen	208.92	199.70
Malta	0.682	0.629
Netherlands Gld	3.242	2.957
New Zealand	1.77	1.68
Norway Kr	12.94	12.05
Portugal Esc	915.75	853.00
S Africa R	12.85	12.10
Spain Ptas	263.79	245.00
Sweden Kr	15.85	14.70
Switzerland Fr	2.26	2.10
Taiwan Nts	208.92	208.92
USA \$	1.776	1.635

Prices for small denomination bank notes are as supplied by Barclay Bank. Other prices apply to banknotes of other denominations. Rates set at close of trading yesterday.

A WORKING WEEK FOR: CHARLES MILLER SMITH

Battle-hardened general pulls off a revolution

Oliver August calls on the soft-spoken, heavy phone-using boss who almost single-handedly redrew the map of a chemicals empire

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

THE man who runs Britain's largest chemicals business does not have a desk. Charles Miller Smith has steered the radical reshaping of the Imperial Chemical Industries empire from a tidy green leather sofa. There are no loose pieces of paper or bank reports around. Not a single paper clip on the floor. One could mistake his office for the common room of an Oxford college.

"I've always had a horror of locking up my papers in a desk and losing the key," Miller Smith admits. So he disposed of the desk and the piles of paper. The only thing to clutter the oak-panelled room is his trademark cardigan. Neatly folded, it is on the sofa next to him. He is reluctant to wear it having found a small hole in it. For a man who earned half a million pounds last year as chief executive this seems an unusually mundane worry. It is all the more unusual in view of his recent achievements.

The last fortnight has seen the culmination of Miller Smith's revolution that has changed ICI beyond recognition. In a frantic six days one deal was completed and two more agreed, with a total value of £3 billion. Like a battle-hardened general, he marshalled his divisions and discarded renegade units. He also gave marching orders to tens of thousands of employees.

Almost single-handedly he redrew the map of a chemicals empire often described as the bellwether of British industry. But he did so without losing his reputation for being a soft-spoken conciliator.

The upheaval started with the completion of the £5 billion acquisition of Unilever's specialty chemicals business. During his 30-plus years at Unilever, the unit had been built up by Miller Smith himself. When he moved to ICI two years ago, he took with him the idea of focusing on specialty and industrial chemicals.

In a decisive break with the past, he designed a twin strategy, that would remove ICI still further from its historic roots as a bulk chemicals producer and took it closer to the consumer and into less cyclical markets.

The acquisition of the Unilever division was the cornerstone of this strategy, which has won him praise from the City and within ICI. Sir Ronald Hempel, its chairman, said: "ICI was formed by merger 70 years ago. This deal creates nothing less than a new ICI for the new millennium."

To pay for Unilever's specialty chemicals business, Miller Smith needed to find £3 billion cash. In May, he gave himself three years to raise the money by selling off non-core activities. Less than three months later he has got the money. How did he do it? After completing the

Unilever deal on Tuesday last week, he sold £1 billion worth of shares in ICI Australia the next Friday. This move was followed on Monday by the sale of several divisions, including the polyester unit, to DuPont for almost £2 billion. That paid for the acquisition of the Unilever business. "It gives me an overwhelming sense of satisfaction," says an understandably tired Miller Smith.

But the bare financial mechanics of his deal-making are no real answer to the question of how he did it. How could he move with such speed when ICI executives had despaired for so long? How could he make so many people join his bandwagon when the doorman hardly notices him slipping through the steel gates at the Millbank head office?

"The Unilever deal, for example, I sat for ten days non-stop on this sofa here. The only difference was instead of one, two, three, four people in the room," Miller Smith says, slowly gazing around the office, "there were a dozen by the end."

One of the greatest corporate reshaping in recent British history was essentially negotiated by Miller Smith talking on the phone from his sofa. "I had the phone here on my lap particularly at night. For some strange reason it doesn't ring through so you have to watch the red arrow flash. That's how we ran the

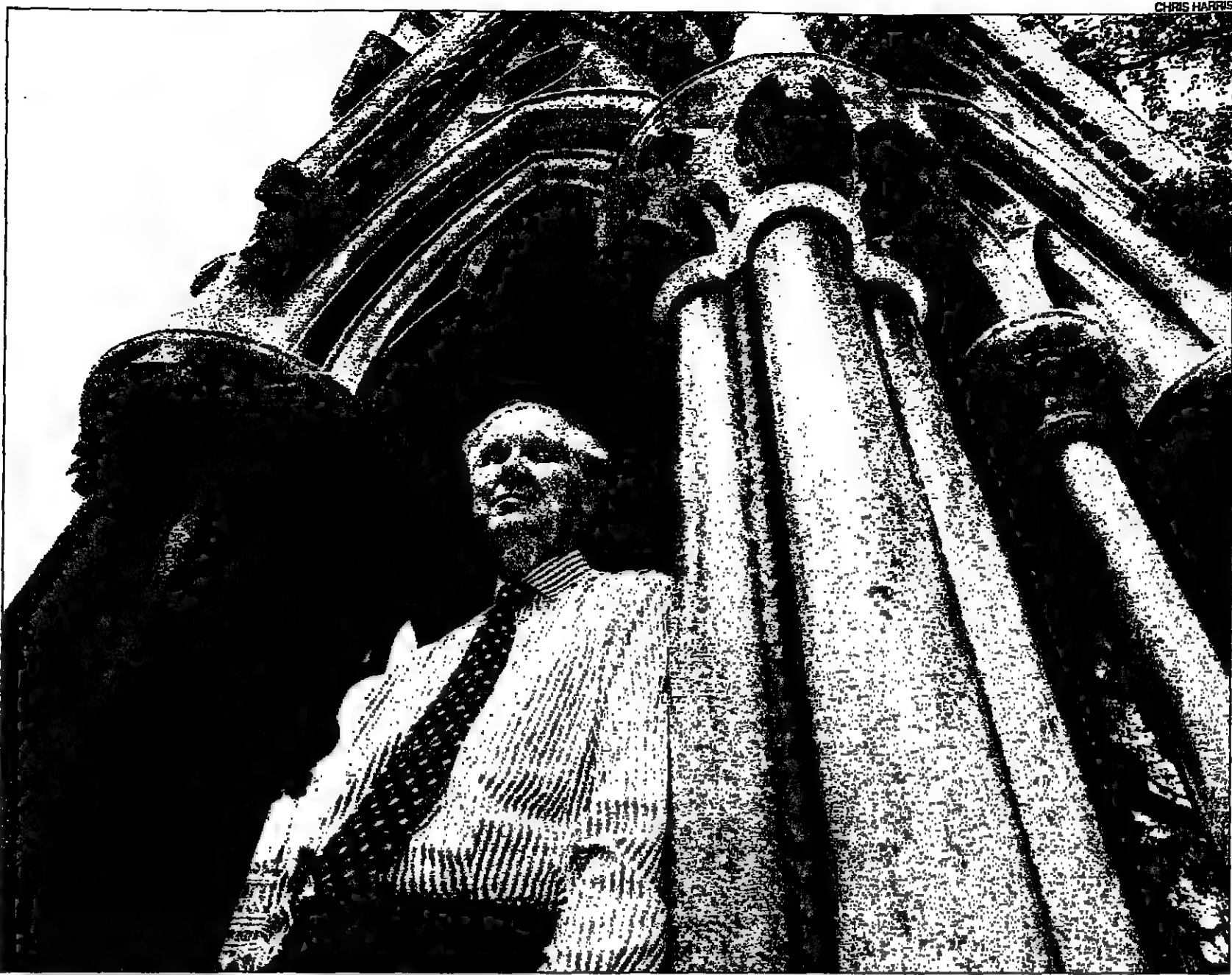
Unilever deal, and similarly for the DuPont and the Australian deal."

But Miller Smith does not merely run the empire sitting down. "I'm a terrible wanderer," he says. During the hectic days of last week he got up at dawn and arrived at Millbank around 7.30 am. Much to the dismay of his secretary, Linda, he then proceeded to stroll through offices on all six floors, talking to staff instead of attending scheduled meetings.

Somewhat ironically for someone universally described as soft-spoken, Miller Smith thinks of himself as a compulsive walker and talker as well as a bad timekeeper. He says: "I am a wanderer around Millbank and a wanderer around the world. Why? You hear and see much more when you go to people than you ever get out of a hundred reports."

"That intuitive feeling of what is really happening, that gets lost when it is distilled, you will pick up in a second when you speak to people. It is a great way to break down barriers. If you wander around this building and wander around ICI, it is remarkable what you hear. You pick up in an instant personal tensions or animosities. You pick up different points of view left out of reports because they don't fit in with conventional wisdom."

ICI being a global enterprise, Miller Smith can walk into the offices of only a tiny minority of his staff. The group as a whole has more than 60,000 employees. To stay in touch with the many divisional executives in more than 30 countries — and to avoid reading their reports — he inevitably has to rely on the phone. Last



Charles Miller Smith has always had a horror of locking up documents in a desk and losing the key — so he disposed of the desk and the piles of paper

week he made an average of 50 calls a day. "I use the phone a lot," he says with mock understatement. Next to his preferred end of the sofa — looking out over the Thames and Lambeth Bridge — is a small coffee table. The surface is wiped clean. On occasion his butler may put down a cup of Earl Grey. But the two items always on the table are his mobile phone and the old-fashioned phone with the red arrow.

The phone was especially invaluable during the Australian negotiations. The Australian Government sold its gold reserves a week before the billion-pound bundle of shares in ICI Australia were to be offered to investors, causing upheaval in the Australian financial markets.

Panic set in at Millbank. There was no telling how the offering was going to be affected.

Miller Smith says: "I made a call just before I went to sleep Thursday evening so the market was just opening in Australia. I heard the stock had opened well and knew the international offer was going well. I was back in my office at six

o'clock in the morning. I phoned Mike Evans at Goldman Sachs and heard how it was going to be priced."

The alternative to phone overkill would be the acquisition of an ICI corporate jet to ferry Miller Smith around. But, showing the Calvinist frugality of his Scottish upbringing, he prefers scheduled airlines. "They are safer and cheaper," he says.

Restricting overseas travel to occasional trips also has the advantage of granting him more time with the family. His musings on his loved ones paint the picture of a deeply ordinary life. Happily

married to Dorothy for 40 years, Miller Smith has three grown-up children. He and his wife like to stay in most nights.

When he comes home they gossip "about the office". At ten he goes to bed and reads until he falls asleep. Every Saturday, including last Saturday, the two of them go to the same Italian restaurant on Lower Sloane Street. Every Sunday, including last Sunday, the whole family lunches together. Whenever possible they go walking near their cottage in Aberdeenshire.

To relax, the mild-mannered Miller Smith is at present reading an ancient

Chinese book, *The Art of War*, by Sun Zi. The book is the declared bible of famous generals like Norman Schwarzkopf, the Gulf War supreme. Is this where the grand strategies for ICI come from? And would a truly mild-mannered man really read such a book?

Whatever the answer, this oh-so-ordinary man is everything the British like in themselves. He is courteous, self-deprecating and strong-minded without being brash. While it is hard to believe that Miller Smith is really in charge of such a huge company, it is impossible to dislike him.

‘This deal creates a new ICI for the new millennium’

Pen friends

ALL those teenage scribblers at ABN Amro Hoare Govett have a new boss. Lyn Moran, former managing director of investment banking at James Capel, resurfaces there on Monday as head of European research. She has been brought in by Nick Barnister, recently made regional boss at Hoare Govett for Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

I would not wish to disturb any of those keen analysts. But her priority is to ensure that research, sales and corporate finance work as a team. I am told. This might be a bit of corporate flim-flam, or it might be more sinister. Most analysts feel that job satisfaction, reputation, sanity, whatever, is best safeguarded by having as little to do with corporate finance as possible.

● ONE of the men behind the production by cloning of Dolly the sheep is joining the biotech company PPL Therapeutics. Keith Campbell joins from the Roslin Institute, where he worked on the Dolly project with Ian Wilmut. He is heading research on a process called nuclear transfer, which was used on Dolly and some-

thing to do with PPL's business. Don't ask me how, but it gives me the shivers. A million dollars to a broken test-tube that he gets a sharp rise from his academic salary.

I was unable to track down Dr Campbell to answer one or two scientific questions that bother me. Given all sheep look the same, how do we know you've cloned them? And how do we know Dolly 2 isn't merely Dolly 1's natural sister with a matching haircut?

Carr race

SOMETHING of a needle match at this weekend's Dragon Boat race at Henley? A team is entering from the broker Carr Sheppards, including Fred Carr, chief executive and an Oxford rowing blue — on the assumption that he does not swamp the boat, for he is a big chap. There is also a boat crewed by Investec of South Africa, which has just bought Carr Sheppards. It is whispered that the South Africans, who are never keen on losing at anything, might have slipped in a couple of ringers.

Figured out

YET another senior City journalist has been hured into the seedy world of financial public relations. Ian Griffiths, City editor of the *Independent on Sunday* is starting his descent into inevitable madness, degradation and despair in early September, when he joins the Ludgate PR agency.

Griffiths, 42, is well travelled, having run the City pages of *The Independent* and the *London Evening Standard*, but he has now succumbed to the mid-life crisis that seems to afflict so many City writers eventually. Or perhaps it is the money. He is a qualified accountant with a serious publication to his name, *Creative Accounting* —



"not your usual popular stuff written by a journalist," says my informant wittingly.

Steele away

GRAHAM STEELE has quit abruptly as managing director of the Superdrug chain "for personal reasons". Kingfisher, which owns Superdrug, was not being very helpful yesterday, but I am assured this has nothing to do with reports a while back that he was planning a management buyout. The statement was slipped out quietly and not announced through the Stock Exchange screens. Legal, as he was not a main board director, but still strange. The City, puzzled, immediately wondered whether the expensive refurbishment at Superdrug stores had not proved its worth. No connection with this, either, I am assured.

Landau goes

FAREWELL then, Ervin Landau, retiring as chairman of Dares Estates and selling his 3 per cent stake. The property fiddler paid £356,000 in fees to its lawyers, Landau Nock & Co, last year — senior partner, yes, you guessed it. I wonder if this volume of work will continue to flow in future.

● IF MINISTERS did indeed decide on Thursday that the

British Aerospace deal to sell Hawk jets to Indonesia should be allowed through, they showed remarkable insensitivity. The £160 million sale has been opposed by civil rights groups because of allegations that Indonesia uses the craft against its opponents in East Timor. Last Thursday, July 17, was the 21st anniversary of the illegal annexation of East Timor by Indonesia.

In person

I HEAR Merrill Lynch was upstaged at a roadshow yesterday to launch a bond issue from Reliance Industries of India by the other co-lead manager, HSBC. The Americans fielded the usual team at Painters Hall, for the 100 or so fund managers and analysts that turned up.

But HSBC brought along Sir William Purves, its chairman, who has played an increasingly hands-on role since his return from Hong Kong a while back, to add the personal touch — "leaving Merrill in the front row with fixed grins," says my informant. As one of his colleagues muttered as Purves took the rostrum for a brief presentation, "once a commercial banker, always a commercial banker."

MARTIN WALLER



Sir William Purves — once a commercial banker, always a commercial banker

THE TIMES

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FEATURE

On Sight and Insight. A story about coping with blindness.

CAMPUS

bye Bonfield

WINDFALLS 31

Which is the best society share to sell?

WEEKEND MONEY

INVESTMENT 36,37

Try offshore for the best catches

THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

A bigger splash for the pound on holiday

Britons travelling overseas are gaining from the strength of sterling, Caroline Merrell finds

The Madrid Ritz, one of the most opulent and grand hotels in Europe, is out of the reach of most people's holiday budgets. A double room with breakfast will cost nearly 40,000 pesetas plus 7 per cent tax. However, while still representing a substantial sum, the cost of staying in this world-famous hotel has dropped dramatically over the past year.

The incredible strength of sterling has had an equally dramatic effect on the costs of spending overseas. A year ago, one night would have cost about £208. Today it will cost £163.

With about 14 million Britons expected to travel overseas this year, and 40 per cent of these choosing Spain as their favoured holiday destination, the news that, for example, they can get around 244 pesetas to the pound, instead of the 192 they received a year ago, will be heartening — especially for those planning to travel abroad in the next few weeks as the holiday season begins in earnest.

A pound that is rising strongly can lead to some unexpected savings while overseas. Those who use credit cards — still the cheapest way of spending while away — will get the exchange rate that prevails on the day the credit slip makes it back to the particular UK bank.

The length of time this takes depends on the particular country. For example, a month's delay in the transaction being processed would have meant that goods purchased last month could have ended up being 4 per cent cheaper than expected.

Those who are contemplating going on holiday over the next few months must also consider whether it is worth stockpiling currency with the pound at these levels.

The news from economists is that the pound could still continue to rise, especially if consumer spending, fuelled by building society windfalls, forces the Bank of England to

push up interest rates. However, this rise is likely to be only in the short term — the value of sterling is almost certain to fall over the longer term.

Trevor Williams, Lloyds TSB's senior economist, says: "The levels of sterling are not sustainable although it would not be surprising if sterling went a little higher. Our interest rates are now at a peak. Sterling could damage the UK economy, leading to a self-off of sterling at the end of this year. The pound could fall to 2.50 marks by the second half of 1998."

Chris Wright, a Barclays economist, said: "Sterling's strength against the mark has been because of the strong economy and interest rate pressure."

"In the second half of this year, sterling will remain quite strong, but will not go higher. Next year, interest rate rises will slow the economy and the German recovery will continue and so sterling will weaken." A recent report from

Thomas Cook, the travel agent, looked at the effect of the pound's strength on the currencies of different holiday destinations. For example, £250 will buy nearly 50 per cent more Turkish lira than a year ago, a saving of £121.28. The same sum will buy 20 per cent more pesetas, francs and drachmas than a year ago, a saving of about £45. The table below shows some of the rates available on the high street.

However, Keith Meyrick, American Express director, gives a warning against stockpiling currency to take advantage of the surge in sterling.

He said: "Most people tend to buy their currency about a week in advance. It would be worth stockpiling it only if large amounts are being exchanged."

He does not advise holiday-makers to carry vast amounts of cash while overseas. Most travel agents recommend that holidaymakers carry a mix of cash, traveller's cheques, and credit and debit cards.



KW saga plods along

It's been a year since the Investors Compensation Scheme (ICS) formally took on the case of Knight Williams. The anniversary last Tuesday was not marked by party hats and streamers.

The ICS exists to bail out customers of failed financial companies. Knight Williams was a major financial adviser that went into liquidation in 1995 amid claims it had given bad advice to investors, many of them elderly. The company was fined £50,000 for rule breaches in 1994.

The ICS has received more than 1,100 compensation requests. To date it says it has paid out in only eight cases, a total of £128,000.

The already slow progress has been further delayed by former Knight Williams directors. With a threat of legal action, they have persuaded the ICS to allow them to examine compensation offers before they are sent.

The ICS has said that this will add an extra month to each claim. So far, it has dismissed all objections raised by directors in their lengthy commentaries on offers.

Kenneth Jordan, chairman of the Knight Williams Investors' Action Group of disgruntled investors, claims the directors are "disgracefully" obstructing the clean-up operation, increasing the risk of elderly claimants dying before they receive compensation.

The group has appealed to Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, for an urgent review. Joe Egerton, a spokesman for the directors, says they are just safeguarding their rights and reputations. The directors admit some clear instances of bad advice, but deny that recommending overseas investments to some customers was

Continued on page 32, col 5

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

Exchange Rates				
Bank	Building Rate	£1000	Fee	
Barclays Bank July 17, 1997				
France	9.89	1,998	2%	
Germany	2.45	40,100	min £3	
Italy	2.927	565.4		
Lira	2,058	571,800		
US Dollars	1.638	327.5		
MarWest Bank				
France	9.87	1,990	1.5%	
Germany	2.45	40,100	min £2.50	
Italy	2.927	565.4		
Lira	2,058	571,800		
US Dollars	1.638	327.5		
Libby Bank				
France	9.89	1,998	2%	
Germany	2.45	40,100	min £3	
Italy	2.927	565.4		
Lira	2,058	571,800		
US Dollars	1.638	327.5		
Midway National				
France	9.877	1,941	1.5%	
Germany	2.45	40,100	min £3	
Italy	2.927	565.4		
Lira	2,058	571,800		
US Dollars	1.638	327.5		
Amex				
France	9.877	1,941	1.5%	
Germany	2.45	40,100	min £3	
Italy	2.927	565.4		
Lira	2,058	571,800		
US Dollars	1.638	327.5		
Post Office				
France	9.89	1,998	1%	
Germany	2.45	40,100	min £2.50	
Italy	2.927	565.4		
Lira	2,058	571,800		
US Dollars	1.638	327.5		
Thomas Cook				
France	9.89	1,998	2%	
Germany	2.45	40,100	min £3	
Italy	2.927	565.4		
Lira	2,058	571,800		
US Dollars	1.638	327.5		
Barclays				
France	9.89	1,998	2%	
Germany	2.45	40,100	min £3	
Italy	2.927	565.4		
Lira	2,058	571,800		
US Dollars	1.638	327.5		
Headline Travel				
France	9.89	1,998	1.5%	
Germany	2.45	40,100	min £2.50	
Italy	2.927	565.4		
Lira	2,058	571,800		
US Dollars	1.638	327.5		

Dire outlook for pensions

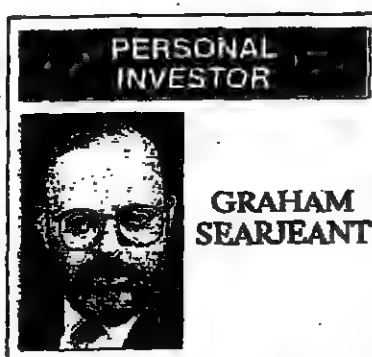
Responsible young savers face a puzzling conflict. On the one hand they are told how vital it is that they should start a private pension plan as soon as possible because future taxpayers will not provide. On the other, they are told by people who should know better that all available pension schemes are a bad deal. In any case, the system is going to be reformed so that anyone signing up now is buying a pig in a poke.

For those of us brought up in a more stable society, it seems almost an act of treason to dissuade the uncommitted from signing up to pension plans. Yet there seem few good reasons to do so, at least until the Government's review has led to firm proposals.

If that review is to help those conducting it had better understand that pension plans are not intrinsically as wonderful as they seem to be. A distinction should be drawn between occupational schemes under which a company offers a pension linked to final salary and the rest. These final salary schemes are still essentially a benefit to which employees contribute and should generally be accepted as such.

Pension plans that depend wholly on investment returns are a different matter. They force you to put regular amounts into a pot that is generally outside your control, which cannot be tapped when needed and which is subject to rules that may be quite inappropriate in 40 years' time, when your savings are still trapped inside.

This drawback was illustrated by the £5 billion a year Budget grab. Millions



of people locked into pension plans now need individual advice on how much extra they would have to save to maintain their hopes for retirement.

When you retire, the proceeds of investment must eventually be converted into an annuity that dies with the named beneficiaries. That makes it an exceptionally inflexible vehicle for people's main savings and ensures that those savings cannot be passed on to future generations.

This basic package is so unattractive that few sensible folk, let alone the fickle, would sign up. To meet public policy objectives, exceptional incentives have long been offered. The main attraction has been the tax regime, which relieves contributions and investment returns, allowing savings to roll up before pensions are taxed as income. Employees usually have another huge incentive. Their employer makes a parallel contribution that cannot be taken as pay.

Harriet Harman, the Social Security

Secretary, says that the first objective of her pensions review is to establish a "sustainable consensus". The essential in any such consensus is for the three main parties to commit themselves to a stable regime of tax incentives.

No such consensus is available. The Chancellor is unlikely to restore the dividend credits he is abolishing. The Tories went into the last election with a plan to abolish tax relief on contributions, the bright idea of the new Shadow Chancellor. Barring big changes of heart, future savers can probably work out for themselves an unspoken consensus. Remaining tax breaks will be run down, much as tax reliefs for families or house purchase have been.

The alternative to a carrot is a stick. It is a fair bet that well-intentioned innovations Labour mullied over in opposition, such as replacing Serps with a bigger funded stakeholder pension and a scheme for those outside the labour market, will have to be forced on consumers. Employers would also be compelled to contribute. Both will reduce that funded pensions are now to become a tax like the state pension linked to National Insurance contributions. They will logically keep their commitment to a minimum and divert other savings to more flexible and attractive forms.

The likely upshot of reform will be to extend some funded provision to those who now lack it, but to cut pensions provision overall. This may be what the meddling elite has in mind. It is surely not the best way forward.

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Big scramble for a gamble

More than £1.5 billion was invested in building societies last month, the biggest inflow for more than a decade, as speculators rushed to take a gamble on the next demutualisation.

Apart from hoping for payouts, investors were betting on a rise in saving rates after last week's increase in mortgage interest rates. The Halifax delayed its loan rate rise for a week, but succumbed on Thursday. Its standard variable rate is now up 0.25 per cent at 8.2 per cent in line with the Abbey National, Cheltenham & Gloucester, Northern Rock, Alliance & Leicester and NatWest. Halifax borrowers with a £60,000 mortgage will now pay between £9 and £11.55 more a month.

The Halifax move prompted an immediate response from the Nationwide, which pushed its rate up 0.35 per cent to 7.85 per cent. Britain's largest building society had held off a move after the rate rise last month. Although keen to maintain a gap between itself and the banks it had found a 0.6 per cent differential an increasing strain.

These developments restored equilibrium to a market which has got used to the rule of thumb that says

mutuals offer better deals. With Chelsea Building Society adding 0.35 per cent to its variable rate this week there are now four large building societies at 7.95 per cent (Birmingham Midshires, Lambeth and Portman are the others). Some mutuals are to stay just below this although it makes little difference to their borrowers' pockets. The Scarborough, for instance, offers 7.94 per cent, a monthly saving of 46p if you have a £60,000 mortgage.

The Nationwide and Principality are at 7.35 and National Counties at 7.39. If you are looking for the lowest of the low try Penrith (01768 863 675), which has a 6.99 per cent variable rate but restricts loans to 75 per cent LTV (loan to value) for borrowers outside Cumbria, Staffordshire and Leicestershire.

Many borrowers do not pay the variable rate for long, preferring to fix their payments as soon as they can. With the prospect of further interest rate rises business in fixed deals is booming. However, Philip Cartwright, of London & Country, says: "Don't take the discount at face value. Look at what the underlying rate is and check if the lender has

consistently been below the Halifax." Flexible mortgages sound great but have yet to hit the big time with homeowners. These schemes allow borrowers to vary how much and when they pay back on the loan and draw extra money when needed. However, until now, they have failed to offer protection against rising interest rates, a serious drawback when the UK has had three rises since May and at least three more are expected by the year's end.

Scottish Widows Bank and John Charcol, the mortgage adviser, aim to change this. They have launched a flexible mortgage that promises to keep its rates between 6.5 and 8.3 per cent until September 24, 2000. Borrowers will split the mortgage into two loans, up to 80 per cent of the value of the property. The first is the base loan on which the regular monthly payments are set. Borrowers can pay extra money or take payment holidays of up to 12 months. Interest is calculated daily so borrowers will see the immediate effect of their payments.

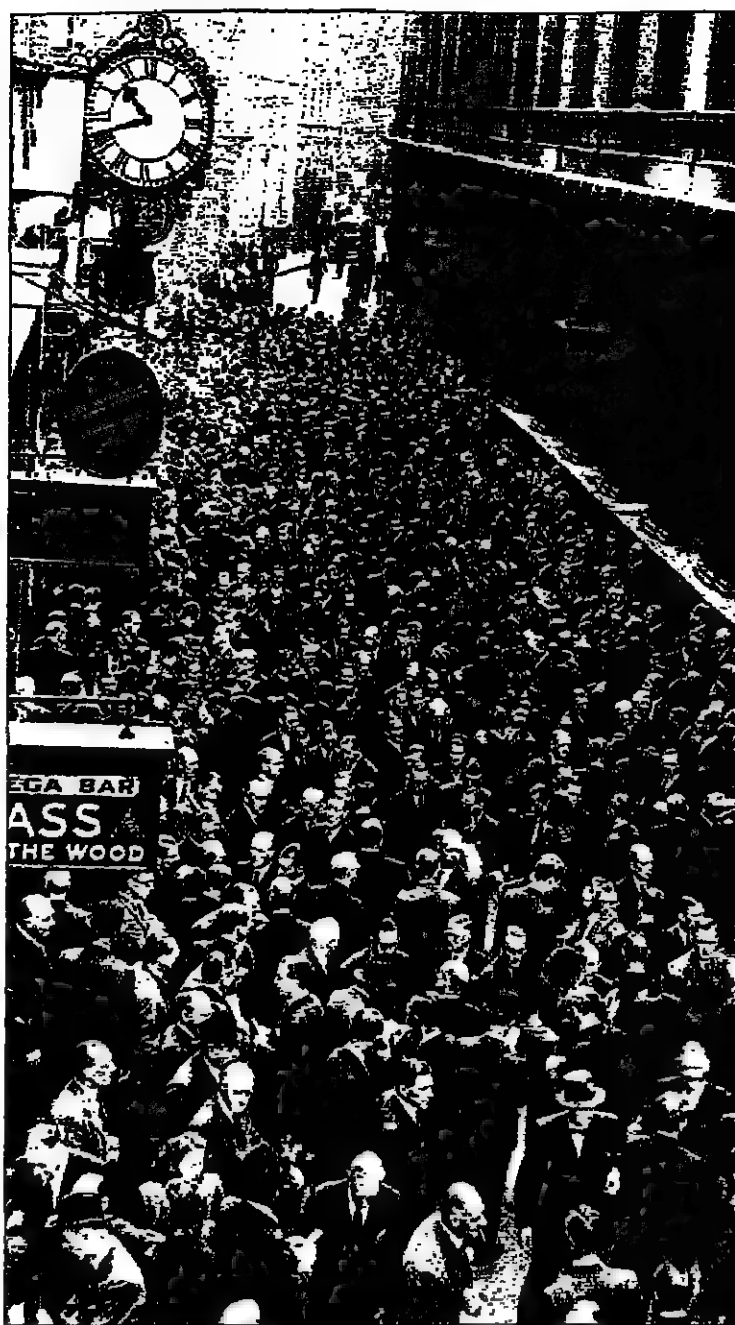
On top of this they can have a flexible account up to £50,000. Interest is charged at the same rate as the base loan and money may be withdrawn in £1,000 lots with a chequebook. There are no redemption penalties, compulsory insurance, mortgage indemnity guarantees but there is a 0.4 per cent booking fee.

The Building Societies Association launched a scathing criticism of the windfall speculation that led to the massive £1.8 billion inflow last month. It described a "feeding frenzy" of carpetbaggers at some branches.

Although the momentum behind the Nationwide carpetbagging had seemed to sag with the increasingly erratic behaviour of its ringleader, Michael Hardern, a butler, the campaign to tear away its mutual status got a boost this week, with Nationwide saying it expected a high level of support for pro-demutualisation candidates in board elections.

If they are elected, the society is almost certain to convert to a bank or invite a takeover. The Birmingham Midshires Building Society looks to be close to conversion, too. It has appointed JP Morgan, the corporate adviser, a tell-tale move. It could yield around £1,200 a head and carpetbaggers need £2,500 to invest.

Bradford & Bingley could be mugged by conversion zealots if Nationwide falls: £500 gets them a qualifying savings account. Britannia would be another target for the swarm, with £2,000 needed in a qualifying share account. The Yorkshire is another potential bid target. To gain membership of this society you must have £2,000 in a qualifying share account. To become a member of the Portman, you need £1,000.



Speculators have crowded into building societies in the hope of payouts

BEST FIXED-RATE MORTGAGES

Lender	Rate	Scheme details	Redemption penalty	Fee
Principality 0800 454478	4.40%	2.88% dec-1.9.99	Rapey discount	Nil 1
National Counties 01752 744186	6.84%	1.75% dec-1.8.99	Colours 1.2.02	£280 2
Nationwide 0800 302010	6.40%	Fixed for 2 years	4 mths int in yr 1, 3 mths int in yr 2	£295 3
Nationwide 0800 302010	7.25%	Fixed for 3 years	5 mths int in yr 1, 4 mths int in yr 2	£295 3
Principality 0800 454478	7.38%	Fixed to 30.8.02	180 days int-1.7.02	£195 4
Abbey National 0800 855100	7.98%	Fixed to 2.11.07	270 days int-2.11.07	£280 5

Notes: 1 BHC purchases or remortgages, LTV 75%, reduced discount to 95% LTV. 2 Purchases or remortgages to 70% LTV. 3 Purchases only to 95% LTV, fee refunded on completion. 4 BHC purchases or remortgages to 75% LTV, £500 cashback. 5 Purchases or remortgages to 95% LTV. BHC = Compulsory Buildings & Home Contents Insurance. LTV = Loan to Value ratio.

Source: London & Country Mortgages

Boost for CMC borrowers

The Office of Fair Trading's crackdown on secondary mortgage lenders is the second piece of good news in a week for thousands of beleaguered borrowers with City Mortgage Corporation (CMC).

John Bridgeman, Director-General of the OFT, yesterday threatened to remove the licences of lenders, such as CMC, which use dual rates of interest and charge heavy redemption penalties based on the now infamous rule 78.

Two hundred families have had their homes reposessed by CMC in the past two years as their debts have escalated out of their control. Another 1,000 have experienced the trauma of being taken to court.

However, solicitors are hoping to turn the tables on CMC. They believe its practices constitute unfair terms and are not legally binding. At a public meeting at the House of Commons on Monday they announced plans to bring a class action against the lender in the High Court. This could pave the way for compensation claims from all 30,000 people who have taken out loans with CMC. This could cost the company and Cityscape, its US parent, millions of pounds.

One borrower, Valerie Algie, of Reading, wanted £5,000 to renovate her house. A representative of Charles Ashworth, one of CMC's most important brokers, convinced her to borrow £15,000 instead. Unsecured loans over this level are unregulated. Mrs Algie, who works in a supermarket, says she missed her first payment when she was off sick. She claims that CMC increased her monthly payments from £300 to £500. CMC denies the figures and says Mrs Algie originally asked for a £17,000 loan. It reposessed her house last October.

David Steene, CMC's managing director and a former Conservative councillor who gave £20,000 to the election campaign of William Hague for the Tory party leadership, dismisses the legal threat. He says that he welcomes new regulations and wants to hear from unhappy borrowers.

A glossy new newsletter tells borrowers that higher rates of interest will be charged only after three months of late payments.

The CMC Victims' Association can be reached on freephone 0800 404025.

GAVIN LUMSDEN



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance
Editor

Muted voices on mutuality

Traditionally those wishing to draw attention to their cause do something noisy, such as a massed rally in Hyde Park. The campaign for the protection of mutuality has been, to date, a muted affair. Perhaps explaining why it is important that a financial institution should be owned by its customers rather than shareholders is trickier than putting the case for foxhunting.

The news that Nationwide customers may be preparing to vote for conversion, however, ought to bring a swift change of strategy among the mutual defence band. The conversion of the obstinately mutual Nationwide is likely to hasten takeovers and conversions in the rest of the industry. But are building society bosses equal to the fight? The speculators who last month poured £1.8 billion into building societies in the hope of windfalls obviously think not.

Some societies believe that the Government should ride to their rescue. But although legislation might prolong the life of mutuality, it is customers that must principally be persuaded of its value, not politicians. Roy Ranson, managing director of Equitable Life, a highly successful mutual life insurer, believes that mutuality can be defended only if it delivers benefits to customers at minimum cost.

To justify their existence, some societies are offering special deals to savers and borrowers. But these loyalty packages are insufficiently eye-catching, especially as there is often no guarantee that the discounts will continue. In the eyes of the average borrower, a slightly lower mortgage rate pales in comparison with a £1,200 parcel of free shares. The societies may deplore this irreverent attitude, but they themselves have a credibility problem. Bosses will extol mutuality's virtues in public, while, in private, discussing conversions and takeover opportunities with merchant bankers. Too often, the chief executive's impassioned plea for mutuality sounds more like an apology for his own well-paid job.

Meanwhile, as every carpetbagger knows, every conversion to date has been preceded with vehement denials from the society's executives.

There is a case for mutuality. But it is the responsibility of the building societies to present it in a coherent fashion. Nothing will be achieved by deploring the actions of speculators who are acting in a commercial fashion, just like a building society boss negotiating his next pay rise, in fact.

OFT lends hand to borrowers

At last, the Office of Fair Trading has spoken out against some of the nastiest practices of the mortgage lenders that deal with low-income households (see this page). It has threatened to withdraw the credit licences of those companies that double interest rates for borrowers a few days late with their repayments and impose huge penalties on those with the temerity to repay their loans early. These penalties are a means of preventing borrowers from escaping to other lenders where they will be treated with more understanding. You will be surprised to learn that these practices, described by the OFT as "deceitful and oppressive", are entirely legal and will remain so. If the OFT removes licences from these companies, they will be barred only from taking on new customers. They will be free to continue dealing with existing borrowers.

In spite of the introduction this year of a mortgage code, mortgages are unregulated. The Government proposes to bring them within the new investor protection system. But that change will do nothing for those already driven out of their homes.

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COMMENT

Caroline Merrell looks into the new bank's certificate and pricing problems

We're with the Woolwich but where are the shares?

The Woolwich flotation faced further controversy this week as questions were raised about the initial high price of the stock.

Shares in the new bank have now fallen more than 20 per cent in the fortnight since its flotation, even though the stock market broke a record this week, racing towards the 5,000 level. Hundreds of private individuals who bought shares on the first day of trading must be particularly vexed about the plunging share price.

For example, investors using ShareLink, the execution-only stockbroker, bought a total of £3.6 million worth of shares on the first day of dealing. The average price paid for shares was about 360p, while the average purchase was around £3,000. These shareholders will have lost £600 on their investments.

Private client stockbrokers have expressed concern about the pricing of the issue. According to an inside source, some of the 15 market-makers who were dealing with the shares were amazed by the price set by BZW, the adviser to the Woolwich. They expected the stock to be priced at about 330p. Instead it opened at 378p and then fell rapidly to 334p, as the market-makers refused to support the inflated price.

The price then continued to fall to mirror a series of auctions held after each of the first four days of trading. These were held to get rid of the 370 million shares from the Woolwich savers and borrowers who wished to sell their shares straight away. Those buying through the auctions, the institutions, bid a price that was based on the closing price of the previous day's trading. BZW defended its handling of the share sale in this way, claiming it was the only way to ensure a fair price.

Among the biggest losers from the rapidly plunging shares will be the hundreds of Woolwich customers who have not yet received their share certificates because of administrative and computer delays. Some are now pressing for compensation as they missed out on the high first day price.

According to the Woolwich, all share certificates should have been sent out on July 4, in time for the first day of trading on July 7. Among those who have not received their share certificates is Maurice Raison, from Farnborough, in Kent. He is due 842 shares from the Woolwich. He said: "I went in to my branch in Orpington on the first day. They could not help, so I phoned the head office, who told me to phone Lloyds Registrars, despite ten or 15 attempts I have not been able to get through."

Another 74-year-old from



Amanda Clough wants to know which would be the best windfall holding to sell to help to finance a holiday

The building society windfall bonanza means for the first time that millions of people now hold banking or insurance shares. Now many are wondering whether they should become long-term investors or look for opportunities to sell.

Amanda Clough, a reader from Winchester, is pondering whether to sell one of her three windfall holdings. She said: "My husband and I received free shares in the Alliance & Leicester, Halifax and Norwich Union. Our shareholding in each is worth approximately £1,500. If we wanted to pay for a £1,500 holiday,

which one of the shares should we sell?" Stockbrokers say that the two banking shares of the Alliance & Leicester and the Halifax are extremely overpriced, when compared with equivalent shares, such as Abbey National. Jeremy Baistone, of Natwest stockbrokers, said: "The Halifax, for instance, is trading at an 18 per cent premium to the market."

Paul Kavanagh, a partner with Kibik & Co, another broking firm, said: "Norwich Union shares are worth holding on in, while it might be advisable to sell off one of the banking shares." He pointed out that Halifax shares had been valued at

about £4 a share before flotation — they are now trading at about £7.60 per share. Mr Kavanagh advises Mrs Clough to sell the Halifax shares to fund her family's holiday. He added that Alliance & Leicester shares might also benefit from some takeover premium.

Justin Urquhart Stewart, Barclays stockbrokers' managing director, said: "I think it is advisable to hold on to the Norwich Union shares. There are too many banks in this country. Alliance & Leicester and Halifax look too overvalued at this moment." He, too, advised selling Halifax shares.

Stevepage has been sent the wrong share allocation packs on two occasions. He is still waiting for share certificates. He said: "My wife and I are now due a total of 2,080 shares." Alan Middleton, who has yet to get share certificates, said he phoned the Woolwich to be told that the share certificates were still going out in batches. He said: "They told

Some of the shareholders are now pressing for compensation?

me that it could be ten days before the share certificates arrived."

A Woolwich member, based in Warrington, north London, wants to be compensated for the delays in sending out share certificates. "I am entitled to 450 free shares but have received no communication since January 1997. I rang the confidential information line on June 13 and was assured that the problem would be actioned. As nothing hap-

pened until June 20, 1997, I wrote to Sir Brian Jenkins with all the details. The chairman has neither acknowledged nor replied to my letter to date."

He said: "On July 4, I rang again and spent about 15 minutes talking to an official on the conversion helpline and urged the society to send me my share certificates as quickly as possible." He finally received details of his share allocation on July 11.

He continued: "I would like the Woolwich to make up the difference between the share price, when the trading opened on July 7 (367½p) and the share price of the day I finally get my share certificates."

The Woolwich will not admit how many people have been affected by the delays in sending out share certificates. About 700,000 of its 2.5 million members opted to use share certificates rather than go through the corporate nominee account offered by the society.

A spokesman said that there was always bound to be a number of losses through the post. The society claimed that it would not be charging for replacement certificates if the originals failed to turn up.

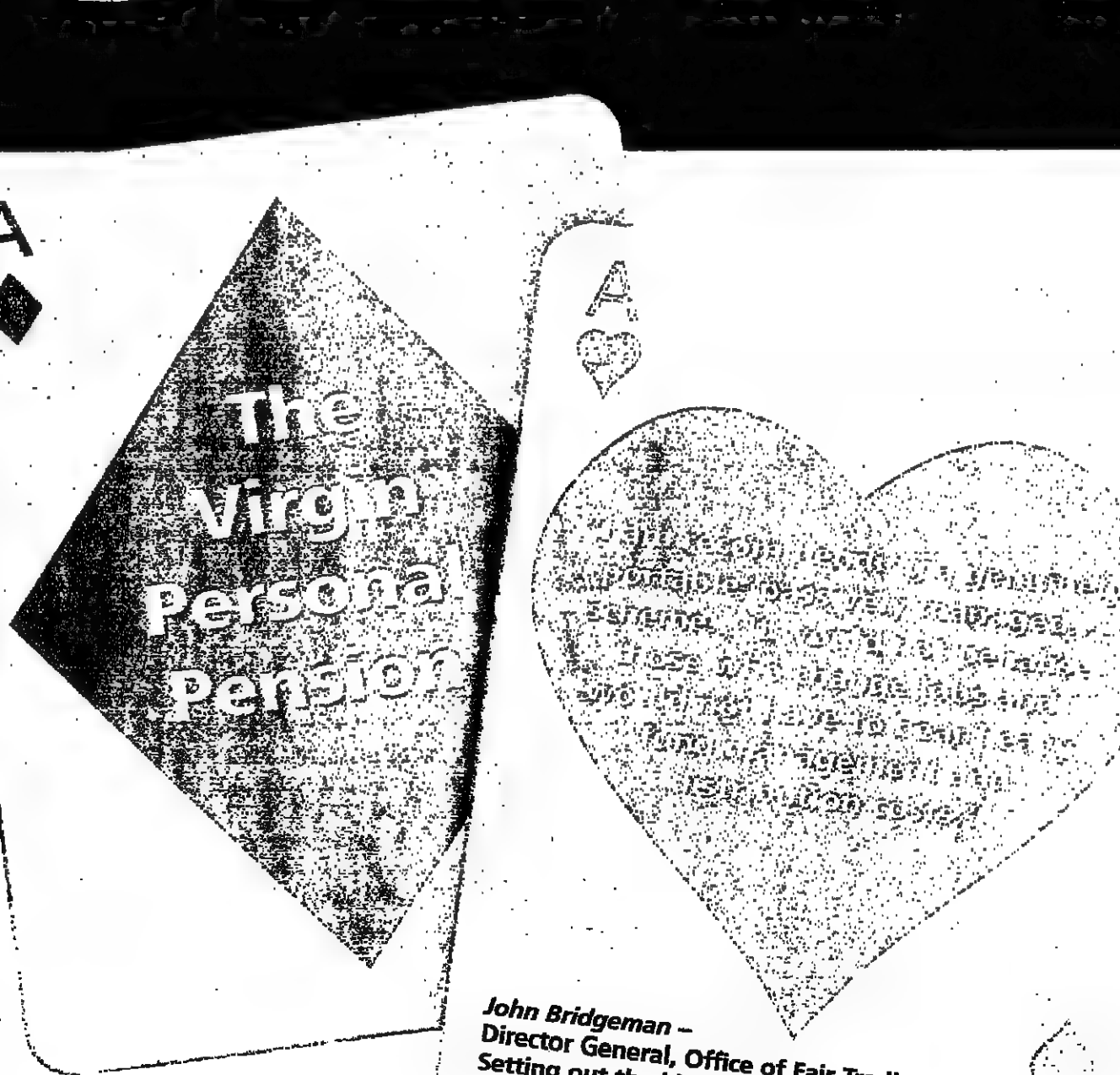
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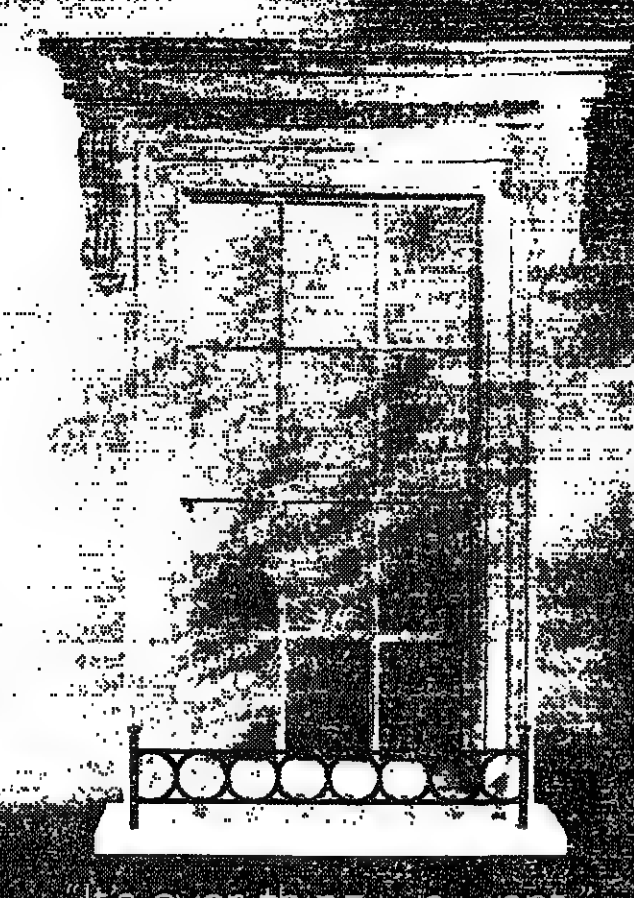
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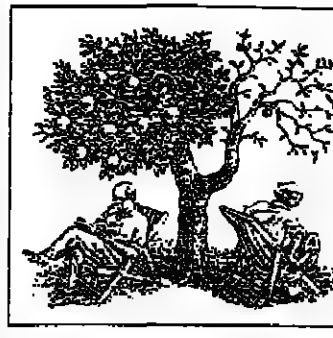
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Sara McConnell looks into a case of records destroyed by the State

Home service lost



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Women who stay at home to raise children and who claim child benefit are entitled to have state pension credits

The state pension is hardly going to make anyone rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Which is all the more reason why losing any part of it is a serious matter.

Two years ago Pensions Postbag exposed the case of Mary Ann Smith, who nearly lost more than a quarter of her pension entitlement because the Benefits Agency had failed to give her credit for the ten years she had spent at home bringing up her family.

Now Susan Robinson, a Weekend Money reader, finds herself in a similar position. Six years of pension credits earned under the Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP) scheme while bringing up her two children have mysteriously disappeared from her record. If they cannot be restored, she stands to lose £10 a week of her pension.

Like Mrs Smith, Mrs Robinson has been told by the DSS that no records exist of her child benefit because these are routinely destroyed five years after the last payment. This means there is no way of checking entitlements. Thousands of other women could be losing out with no way of proving that they have a right to the money.

Mrs Robinson's husband, Guy, writes: "My wife retires in September this year and has six years of HRP missing. We have been trying to over-

come this with the Benefits Agency and The Contributions Agency without success.

"All the Department of Social Security people have been sympathetic and agree that her pension ought to benefit from the missing years of HRP, but all to no avail so far.

"The child benefit centre in Washington can find no record of her child benefit payments before 1986. They say that it is quite normal for old records to be destroyed to 'make space' and they receive many letters such as hers, because of HRP entitlement.

"I feel there must be many people losing part of their pension entitlement, perhaps without even knowing it, because of missing HRP entitlement."

Pensions Postbag replies: "HRP remains an undeservably obscure part of the state pension system. Since 1978, anyone (in practice, usually a woman) bringing up children and claiming child benefit should automatically be entitled to credits on their state pension for each full tax year.

The big problem is that the paying out of child benefit and the keeping of contribution records are carried out by two separate offshoots of the DSS. The Benefits Agency pays out the child benefit. The Contributions Agency keeps the records and does the calculations.

But no one seems to be sure who is ultimately responsible for getting the correct information into the system to calculate your pension. With HRP, it is vital that your child benefit claims are correctly recorded because this triggers

Knight Williams saga plods on

Continued from page 29

wring in principle. They also claim that about 400 to 500 applicants have incurred no loss at all.

Mr Egerton claims that the slowness of the ICS has been the limiting factor so far. The ICS, which has to present each recommendation in a way that would hold up in a court of law, says that it has had difficulty getting the relevant investment performance information from third parties. The Personal Investment Authority has given similar

reasons for its poor progress in resolving the pensions mis-selling crisis. The ICS says that a further 100 cases are now 90 per cent of the way to an offer.

Last week, Mr Egerton said that directors wanted to settle about 100 of the smallest claims with ex-gratia payments that would end the ICS involvement in these cases. It is extremely unlikely that this plan will be seen as acceptable by the ICS or investors.

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Expert guidance is essential if you intend to negotiate the bewildering personal pensions maze successfully

Sara McConnell guides readers through the pension maze

The Government fulfilled another of its election pledges this week with the announcement of a wide-ranging pensions review.

However, the nine-point review did not put forward a cohesive strategy. It also did not rule out anything, including compulsory provision. And it did not comment on a three-volume report put out by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) looking at pensions. This suggested the encouragement of low-cost tracker funds for the mass market. The OFT concluded that "existing pensions are still failing to meet consumers' needs".

There is a growing consensus that people must be persuaded or even compelled to put more money into private pensions. But there is an equally strong consensus that this is impossible without introducing improved personal pensions.

John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, claims he does not want to alarm people with his criticisms. But this will do little to reassure holders of personal pension plans who have just been told what a poor investment they have made.

So is your pension a bad deal? How can you tell? If so, what can you do about it?

Q I'm thinking of taking out a personal pension. But now all this criticism is worrying me. Will I be ripped off?

A Not necessarily. There is a huge variation between the best and the worst pensions. Having a personal pension is not in itself a

How to check out the plan

mistake. If you do not have access to an employer's scheme but want to build up a pension, a personal pension is an obvious choice. Of course you can invest elsewhere, but pensions have the advantage that you cannot be tempted to take out the money before you retire. They also still have generous tax relief. The trick is to pick the right one.

Q But how do I do that? I don't even understand the brochures.

A One way is to go to an independent financial adviser. Choose a firm that charges fees, rather than working on commission. The IFA should carry out a thorough review of your finances before recommending a plan.

Your local building society or bank branch will sell only its own pension plans, generally not among the best deals on the market. Insurance company salesmen are similarly limited. But you can also do some research yourself. Mike Wadsworth, of Watson Wyatt, the actuary, says there are three key measures to consider: charges, investment perfor-

mance and the company's administration.

Q How can I compare one company's charges with another?

A The best way is to get some quotations from three or four insurers, says Stephen Cave, of Moores Marr Bradley, an independent adviser. You can weed out the no-hopers by using regular surveys in reputable magazines such as *Money Management*.

All providers have to produce quotations in the key features document supplied to you, showing how their charges would cut investment returns. They have to use a standard investment return of 9 per cent but deduct their own charges so you can compare one with another. Look at the column on the right to see how much you are left with once charges have been deducted.

Companies deduct a large chunk of their charges at the beginning. With high charges you could see almost all your investment going in charges in the early years. Check how long it will take

before you get back more than you put in.

Q I don't know anything about investment. How do I measure it?

A Pensions are a long-term commitment so the key measure is consistency. There is a huge choice of funds in which you can invest your pension but you are likely to be offered either a with-profits fund or a managed unit-linked fund. Both invest primarily in the stock market in a range of shares. Check how the funds rate in investment league tables. Although the past is no guarantee for the future it gives you a guide. Think long term, at least five years. Do not be dazzled by brilliant short-term performance.

Q I've had my pension for three years but I feel I was pushed into it by the salesman and I'm not happy. Should I cut my losses and get out?

A Check your last statement. There should be two figures showing the amount your pension is worth and the amount you would get if you transferred the money. If your insurer is levying hefty charges, you may find your pension is not worth much because most of it will have gone to pay set-up costs. Your transfer value will be even less because the company will claw back its expenses.

Another alternative is not to put in any more money but to leave it invested in the fund. But charges will continue to eat into your money. Fixed monthly "policy fees" particularly erode small contributions.

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Legal & General Investment Management

Jill Insley looks at a complex scheme that tracks three major market indices

Investment requiring 20/20 vision

After several years of strong growth in the United Kingdom and United States stock markets, some investors are wondering whether it is time to move their money elsewhere. Others are scared to sell up now in case they miss out on any further growth that the two markets produce.

Johnson Fry, the independent financial adviser, hopes to solve the dilemma with a new investment scheme called 20/20 Hindsight. But in the week that the Office of Fair Trading has called for simpler investment products, Johnson Fry has produced one of the most complicated yet seen by private investors.

The scheme aims to track the movement of three major indices — the S&P 500 in the US, the FTSE 100 in the UK and the Nikkei 300 in Japan. What makes the scheme much more unusual is the way that investors benefit from any rises in the three markets. Johnson Fry will apply the movement of the best-performing index to 50 per cent of the 20/20 investment, the movement of the second best-performing index to 30 per cent of the investment, and the movement of the third index to the remaining 20 per cent.

HOOVER MISS

If one or more of the indices falls, this is subtracted from the upward movement in the other indices. But even if the total movement is negative, the investor will still get his or her original investment back after five and a half years.

Johnson Fry claims that this means investors will enjoy all the upside of a global stock market investment, without any of the downside risk.

However, Johnson Fry gives a warning that 20/20 Hindsight should be regarded as a fixed-term investment. Investors who encash their money before February 20, 2003, may not receive the full amount that was originally invested.

Investors will buy shares in 20/20 Hindsight, which is a close-ended investment company listed on the Irish Stock Exchange. Its European Union location means that investors can take advantage of a loophole in personal equity plan legislation to hold



Will investors' eyes, with Hindsight, focus on London, New York or Tokyo?

the shares in either a single company or general Pep.

Some independent financial advisers have recommended the scheme as a suitable pension holding for investors who are nearing retirement. Douglas Gardner, of Thomson Financial Planning Consultants, says that the shares

could be incorporated into self-invested or self-administered pension schemes. He says: "We recognise that there is no guarantee that stock markets are going to continue going up as they have done, and they might well come down. But the scheme is a good way of investing directly in equities

while providing a hedge against stock market falls."

However, Graham Hooper, of Chase de Vere Investments, is nervous about investing in the US and UK markets at their peak. "I also see no reason why Japan should start running away now. The Japanese Government has tried

everything to get the stock market going, with little success," he says.

The 20/20 Hindsight sales literature points out that the three markets have performed well over most of the five and a half year periods since 1970. But Mr Hooper adds: "There are periods of time when formulaic investments just don't work."

John Edwards, a consultant with Berry Birch & Noble, says that he has recommended Johnson Fry products to clients in the past, but has decided not to use 20/20 Hindsight. He says: "I thought it was ingenious, but rejected it on the grounds that it was so sophisticated. It would be difficult to explain and didn't have the outstanding attraction to make the effort worthwhile."

The fact that derivatives are used to produce the growth for 20/20 Hindsight could prove to be the final deterrent for many investors. Essentially, Johnson Fry is asking investors to place their faith in complex financial contracts that have left leading financial institutions floundering. The latest example was NatWest Bank, which lost £77 million — and a lot of credibility — on its derivatives deals.



Shelter your windfall in a Pep for the best tax break

Act now on Woolwich and Norwich Union shares, Gavin Lumsden says

Woolwich customers who have safely received their allocation of shares have until August 17 to shelter their holding in a personal equity plan (Pep). For Norwich Union customers, the deadline runs out on July 26.

Under the Inland Revenue special concession for windfall shares, you are entitled to transfer your holding into a Pep at "zero value". This means that you can still invest your full £9,000 annual Pep allowance. Those who wish to use the concession must act within 42 days of the shares being issued.

By transferring your windfall into a Pep you protect it from income tax until 1999, when Budget changes to the Pep tax rules come into effect. Any gains will also escape capital gains tax, although very few windfall beneficiaries are likely to make profits of more than their £5,500 annual tax-free allowance. However, even if you intend to cash in the shares soon, it can be a worthwhile move, particularly if you had a large windfall.

You can choose between the Peps offered by Norwich Union and Woolwich and the large variety of plans being marketed by unit trust groups. For more information ring the Unit Trust Information Service on 0181-207 1361.

Norwich Union and Woolwich are both offering a single company Pep. Norwich Union is waiving the first year's annual management fee and

charging 0.5 per cent thereafter, up to a maximum of £8.75. Buying and selling shares within the Pep costs 2 per cent of deals up to £500 and 0.5 per cent thereafter. By contrast the Woolwich single company Pep charges 1 per cent.

The Woolwich is also offering the UK Stockmarket Fund Pep. This is a general Pep for people who want to exchange their Woolwich shares for units in a fund investing in British blue chip companies. However, the Woolwich will take a 3 per cent slice of your windfall before it invests. It then charges 1.25 per cent a year. If you opted to receive a Woolwich share certificate, thinking that you would sell your shares immediately but have been disappointed by the fall in the share price, you can change your mind and transfer into the Woolwich Pep facility at no cost.

Those who are interested in fund management Peps should pause if they wish to sell their shares in a hurry. Pep managers impose a levy if you sell shares without reinvesting in their funds.

Fidelity charges £35 each time this is done. But there are loopholes: Mercury Asset Management levies 1 per cent if you transfer into its windfall Pep and sell out later. However, this charge is made only if the sale causes the Pep to be closed. A spokesman confirmed an investor could sell all but one share without the penalty being made.

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Emerging Companies	+764.9	1 out of 28	+119.5	AAA
American Growth	+1228.8	1 out of 12	+131.2	AA
Far Eastern Growth	+469.1	1 out of 13	+142.5	AA
Japanese Growth	+132.2	17 out of 74	+16.6	AA
European Growth	+264.6	3 out of 5	+108.4	—
UK Growth	+395.6	1 out of 26	+110.6	AAA
Asian Smaller Markets	+109.8	12 out of 82	—	AA
Latin American Growth	+56.3	13 out of 25	—	—

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Regular growth

Regular income and capital growth make an odd couple

The abolition of dividend tax credit will hit ordinary taxpayers, says Gavin Lumsden

Investors, large and small, are still coming to terms with the new era ushered in by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, in his Budget three weeks ago. Each day new repercussions emerge of his single most important measure, the abolition of the dividend tax credit.

By abolishing tax credits on dividends, Mr Brown reduced the amount of income all shareholders could receive from equities by 20 per cent. Pension funds and companies have had to start paying the tax immediately, while private investors and personal equity plan holders, who have enjoyed a decade of tax breaks, have been given a two-year reprieve.

At a stroke, Mr Brown polarised the entire investment world into two groups, with opposing aims, those seeking to grow their capital and those wanting a regular income from their assets. While the former's best bet over the long term remains to stay in equities, the situation is more complex for income seekers. By taxing the income from equities, the Chancellor has made gilts and bonds more attractive than ever before. Gilts and bonds are basically IOUs issued by the Government and companies that pay fixed levels of interest to investors who lend them money. At the end of the loan, they return the money to investors. The income, or yield, from gilts and bonds was untouched by the Chancellor and is one of the reasons they are coming back in favour. Any capital growth is also free of capital gains tax.

This is a sea change for investors, likely to reverse decades of investor behaviour. Unlike their European and American counterparts, UK investors have traditionally shied away from bonds as they have seen their returns annihilated by inflation. We asked a number of analysts what strategies they are now adopting to cope with the new environment.

Bill Mott, manager of the Credit Suisse Income unit trust, says that over the next year he plans to increase his investment in income yielding bonds and convertibles to 25 per cent of his portfolio. The remainder will go in shares in companies he thinks will provide capital growth. He recommends investors do the same. "Instead of leaving £50,000 in an equity income fund, put £20,000 in a growth fund and £30,000 in gilts and bonds," Dr Mott says the abolition of the



Fund managers, like *The Odd Couple*, are having to reach a fresh accommodation

dividend tax credit is part of the Labour Government's strategy to create a long-term investment culture in the UK. "The Government's philosophy is that companies should reinvest in their business, not issue dividends to investors. They want investors to invest long term and get their growth free of capital gains tax in return. By definition, income investors, who are buying a stock because it is temporarily at a 25 per cent yield, are value investors with no long-term interest in the company. The Government wants them to look to gilts and bonds instead."

Figures from the authoritative BZW Equity Gilt study suggest that the Chancellor may get his way. After years of underperformance, gilts have achieved a remarkable recovery in the 1990s and have started to attract investors.

Inflation is the enemy of all fixed-interest instruments, as gilts and bonds are sometimes called. In the postwar period inflation was high and decimated the value of the unchanging income investors in gilts and bonds received.

By contrast, shares combined good capital growth and rising income in the form of dividends. For example, investors who bought £100 of shares in 1945 and consistently reinvested the dividends in more shares would have held £1,376 by 1990, after the rise in the cost of living is taken into account. The £100 of gilts would have slumped to £57, a dismal performance. In the past seven years, however, the picture has changed as inflation has stayed consistently low. Although shares have continued their turbo-charged

run, doubling in value, gilts have also picked up speed, with the £57 worth £99 by last year.

Pension funds, those investment behemoths into which millions contribute their earnings, have played their part in this renaissance. As more of their members approach retirement, an increasing number of funds have turned to the capital security offered by bonds. This year's Pensions Act, which imposes strict minimum funding requirements on pension funds, has encouraged even more buying of gilts and bonds.

The long-term outlook for the sector is good as many believe the newly independent Bank of England will fulfil its mission of controlling inflation. However, in the short term, interest rates are set to rise, making cash deposits more and more competitive against gilts and bonds. Another factor income-

seekers should consider is that as more investors buy, the price of gilts and bonds will inevitably rise. This is the opposite of what they want because it means their fixed income, as a proportion of the price they pay, falls.

David Kauders, of Kauders Portfolio Management, suggests investors have a six-month window of opportunity before yields start to fall. "In the past few years you have been able to get 7 to 8 per cent annual yields on gilts and bonds, 2 to 3 per cent higher than cash. This premium is starting to disappear, but if you buy now you can lock into these higher rates for years ahead. People who bought gilts in spring 1990 are still getting 12 to 13 per cent income rolling in." Mr Kauders advises older and wealthy clients, who have about £200,000-£500,000 to invest for their retirement. With this he would buy five government securities to achieve an average annual income of 7 per cent. Yields above this level increase the risk to investor's capital, he cautions.

Alternatively, income investors could consider corporate bond Peps. These can not invest in gilts but do buy into bonds, preference shares and convertibles issued by companies. The income on these investments will remain free of tax after 1999, although the future of the Pep shelter itself is unknown after then.

Ian Millward, of Chase de Vere, recommends three corporate bonds: Commercial Union Monthly Income, Aberdeen Fixed Interest and Henderson Preference & Bond. All invest in a wide range of instruments and have established good track records. Henderson is the cheapest with a 1.5 per cent initial and 0.75 per cent annual management charge. The Aberdeen fund is unusual for taking its 1.25 per cent annual management charge from capital rather than from the income it generates, Mr Millward says. This increases the risk that you may not get all the money you put into it.

Corporate bond Peps have proved popular with investors since their arrival in 1995. Although they are promoted as a secure method of earning income, there are risks and disadvantages to this form of investment. A useful rule of thumb to remember is the higher the income, the greater the potential risk to your capital. In spite of their name, corporate bond Peps can invest in a wide variety of assets. Those investing in preference shares, which guarantee to pay a dividend to their holders, and convertibles, bonds that can be turned into shares, are generally considered to involve more risk. Although the income can be good, the prospect for further income and capital growth is poor. If this is what you want an equity income fund is still attractive, even after the Budget changes.

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THE WEEK IN MONEY

The present system of pension provision was condemned as being expensive and inadequate by the Office of Fair Trading on Tuesday. The findings of a ten-month inquiry said that many personal pension plans represented poor value and company schemes based on final salary discriminated against early leavers.

Investors were urged by Nigel Griffiths, the Consumer Affairs Minister, to steer clear of "easy money" schemes

amid a sharp rise in the level of company investigations. It also emerged that the number of insider-dealing inspections dealt with by DTI investigators rose from 13 to 21 last year.

Harriet Harman, the Social Security Secretary, announced a review of pension provision with the aim of helping low-paid workers. The basic state pension and Serps will be covered in the review, which will focus on plans for a

"stakeholder" second pension and a separate citizenship pension. Women who spend several years out of work would be entitled to pension credits under the proposals.

The Halifax increased its standard variable rate on Thursday by 0.25 per cent to 8.2 per cent, in line with last week's rise in base rates. Nationwide increased its rate by 0.35 per cent to 7.85 per cent, its first rise in two months.

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Nathan Yates looks at the tax breaks available to investors outside the Revenue net

Test the water before you buy

Offshore savings and investment schemes with their generous tax breaks are infinitely beguiling. But many hang back from taking advantage of these concessions as they worry about the security of their cash and the ire of the Inland Revenue. Paul Freeman, of Coopers & Lybrand, the accountancy firm, points out, "The tax advantages may look attractive but, historically, charges on many offshore products tend to be higher, though they are starting to come down." Performance of offshore funds may also be inferior and it is certainly more difficult to monitor. The net effect of these factors can offset the tax benefits. To help you towards a better understanding of the offshore investment scene, our special two-page report covers the schemes and their advantages and disadvantages. Below we answer your questions on the tax rules.

Can offshore havens help me to avoid tax?

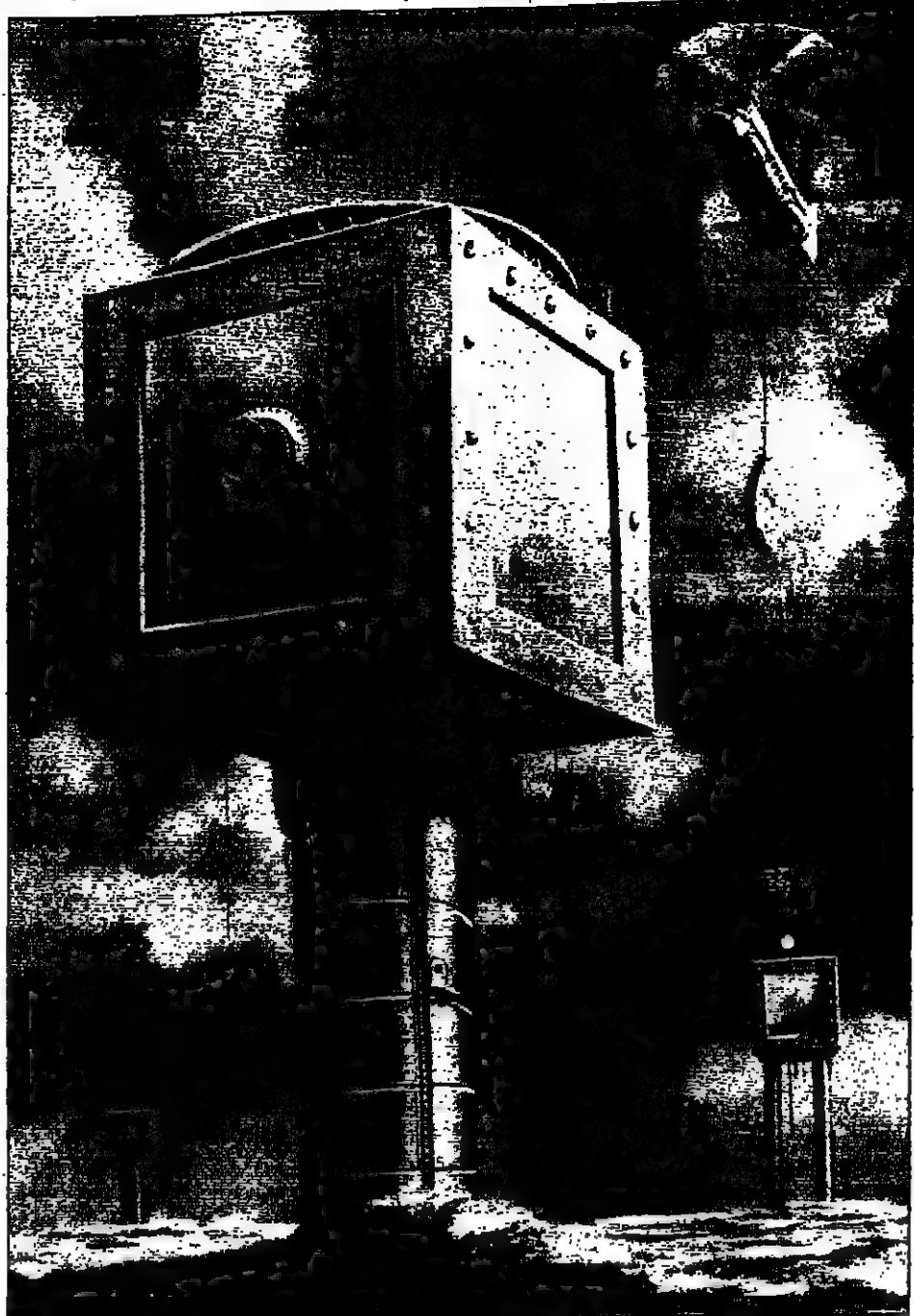
Putting your money offshore will not automatically mean that it escapes the taxman's clutches. As a general rule, all of a British taxpayer's income is liable to UK tax and must be declared, no matter where in the world it is earned. However, there are important weaknesses in the Inland Revenue's armoury. Tax is not paid on offshore

income until it enters this country. An offshore investment fund, for example, will accumulate free of tax until you decide to sell. If you are planning to retire abroad, you may eventually relinquish British resident status. In this case, you will be able to sell your holdings and the accumulated profits will escape UK tax.

Alternatively, you may be a higher-rate taxpayer whose income is likely to drop into the standard rate band after retirement. In this case, using offshore investments to defer your tax bill until after your income falls could cut the payment on returns from 40 to 23 per cent.

Another way in which offshore income can be realised free of tax is by transferring it to a dependent. Typically, a parent could set up a trust in a tax haven such as Guernsey, which would pay out an income to a child during its years at university. Provided this income was below the personal tax allowance of £4,045 per single adult, no tax would be paid.

The offshore tax system is highly complex, and the Inland Revenue is sometimes reluctant to let individuals escape. "There are plenty of areas of offshore tax open to advice challenge, and my advice is to get hold of a good accountant to make yourself as secure as possible," says David Kilshaw of KPMG.



Can I still benefit from going offshore if the Inland Revenue insists on taxing me?

Even if income from offshore investments must be brought into Britain in taxable form, there are still advantages to be gained. Because no tax is paid while your money is overseas, most offshore investment funds do not pay out dividends, but "roll up" or reinvest income. Investments that are allowed to accumulate gross grow faster than those that have to pay tax on returns. Since most offshore funds can invest in the same stocks as UK trusts, in theory you can hold an identical portfolio but add extra growth.

Can I make use of offshore havens if I have only a small amount to invest?

Offshore centres are widely regarded as the preserve of the rich, but this is misleading. In fact, offshore investment can start with a building society account. These are offered by high street names such as Abbey National, Alliance & Leicester, the Halifax and the Woolwich. Interest is paid free of income tax, but once it is declared by the bank or building society, it becomes liable for UK tax and

has to be declared on your tax return. The advantage of these accounts is that saving rates can be higher than those onshore. UK insurance companies also have offshore operations offering investment bonds and life policies, which can be used to shelter capital from onshore taxes.

Will my money be safe if I put it offshore?

Many offshore investments are as safe as their UK equivalents. In the case of building societies or insurance companies, there is little difference in security between an account in a company's offshore subsidiary and another at a mainland branch. However, savers should note that an offshore account does not confer the same membership rights as one based in Britain, and offshore customers may find themselves left out of demutualisation windfalls.

Offshore investment funds may also be as safe as onshore unit or investment trusts, but there are exceptions. The Securities and Investment Board (SIB) offers guidelines to help sift these out. Investors who wish to be sure they are buying a product that meets British standards can restrict their holdings to companies "recognised" by the SIB. These are regulated locally, but are

judged to be as well-controlled as funds in the UK, and many funds in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and Bermuda are included in this category. However, investors should be aware that the safety net is less broad offshore than it is at home. The Investor Compensation Scheme, the last-ditch resource if matters go wrong in the UK, is not available for most offshore investors.

Can people living outside the UK benefit from offshore holdings?

Those living abroad can place their money in offshore havens and obtain the same tax advantages as UK residents. However, in some countries there are exchange controls that limit the outflow of capital. Before the end of apartheid, there were strict exchange controls in South Africa, and British people living there found it difficult to get their money out of the country. South African law has been liberalised to the extent that non-residents no longer find their investments restricted. However, those who become classified as residents are still limited to a £25,000 per year investment in other countries. If you live overseas, it is advisable to check whether there are exchange controls in place.

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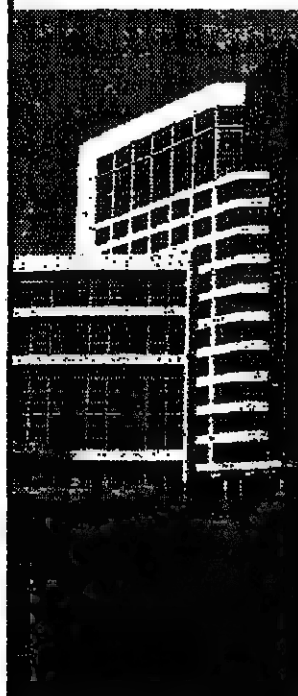
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Try fishing offshore for the best catches

There is a wide and bewildering variety of offshore schemes on offer for UK investors. Sold by companies based in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, Dublin and Luxembourg, the main selling point of all these investments is their tax advantage.

Scottish Life International has recently announced an investment fund - the Self Investment Portfolio, aimed at UK investors concerned about the complexities of self-assessment. John Allison, of Scottish Life, says the fund not only enables investors to manage their portfolios "tax-efficiently with a minimum amount of paperwork", but "the income need not be declared on self-assessment returns as offshore bonds are treated as 'non-income producing assets' by the Revenue".

However, Paul Freeman, of Coopers & Lybrand, the accountants, says prospective investors should be cautious. He said: "There may be changes to the tax treatment of offshore bonds in future. The previous Government had already started the process of reviewing life assurance taxation and the current Government is looking even more closely at the offshore angle."

The main types of offshore investments are:

■ **Unit trust type funds.** These are available in various offshore centres and have a variety of names. The first funds were set up in the Channel Islands, then a number of managers formed funds in Luxembourg, known as SICAVs, to sell to European investors. More recently, com-

Helen Pridham and Marianne Curphey with an assessment of the most popular schemes

panies have used Dublin to set up open-ended investment companies (OEICs).

■ **Offshore funds** often have an umbrella structure, meaning managers run one fund that is split into a number of sub-funds. Many funds work on a single-price system, rather than having a bid and offer price as they do onshore. The tax treatment of an offshore fund depends on whether it rolls up the income that it earns on its investments or pays it out and has distributor status. A UK investor need not pay any tax on a roll-up fund until it is cashed in. Income tax then becomes payable on the gain. So roll-up funds are a useful way to defer tax. If the investor subsequently moves out of the UK, no tax may be payable.

Roll-up funds can be used by parents investing money for their children

■ **Roll-up funds** can be used by parents investing money for their children. In a UK fund the investment income would be taxable as the parents' income. Offshore the money can be left to roll up gross. When the children are 18 and need money

for college, withdrawals may go untaxed if they fall within their personal tax allowance, currently £4,045.

■ **Distributor funds** are taxed in the same way as UK unit trusts. The advantage is that the income is paid gross, which makes them useful for non-taxpayers, such as non-working spouses, who would otherwise have to claim the tax deducted at source on income paid by UK funds.

Another attraction of offshore funds is that there are currency funds on offer which are not available onshore. Rothschild and Guinness Flight have a range of individual currency funds, and managed currency funds that hold portfolios of currencies.

Now could be a good time to consider such funds, according to Philip Saunders, of Guinness Flight. "Sterling is strong at present, but if investors believe it is going to weaken again in future, a way of taking advantage of that trend is through a managed currency fund." High-yielding offshore gilt and fixed-interest funds such as the Murray Financials Bond fund can also be attractive for UK investors.

Investors may be concerned about the security of offshore funds. Although funds in offshore centres such as the Channel Islands, Dublin and Luxembourg are subject to similar degrees of regulation as the UK, they do not all have compensation schemes.

However, providing funds are purchased through an independent financial adviser based in the UK, the investor is still covered by the Investors' Compensation Scheme.

■ **Investment bonds.** These are single-premium life assurance

policies. Most are offered by companies based in the Isle of Man. Many are the international subsidiaries of well-known UK companies such as Eagle Star, Scottish Life or Sun Life. The bonds are used as "wrappers" for a variety of investments. The minimum investment in these bonds is often £50,000. For even wealthier investors there are "highly personalised" bonds, which also enable individual stocks and shares and gilts to be held.

The attraction of the bonds is that there is no tax to pay until you cash in. All gains within the bond roll up free of tax, and investments can be bought and sold within the bond without incurring a capital gains tax liability. Under current law, UK investors can also withdraw up to 5 per cent of their original investment without having to pay tax at the time. If more is withdrawn or when the bond is encashed, income tax may be payable.

The snag with this is that the taxation of life assurance is currently under scrutiny and the tax treatment of withdrawals in particular could change. There may also be a change in the rules covering similar offshore bonds, known as redemption bonds, that can currently be passed on after the death of the policyholder to beneficiaries without liability for income tax or inheritance tax in some cases.

Another disadvantage is that the charges on these bonds can be heavy, especially in the early years. In terms of investor protection, the Isle of Man has a policyholder compensation scheme that is on a par with that of the UK.

■ **Closed-end funds.** These are offshore funds that are similar to investment trusts. Many are described as "single country funds" as they often invest in individual emerging economies. They are often situated offshore for tax reasons, for example, due to double taxation agreements with the countries concerned, or because they wish to have their shares denominated in dollars. Although some of these funds are listed by the Association of Investment Trust Companies (AITC) in its monthly information service, they are aimed mainly at institutional, rather than private investors.



The Channel Islands present a number of offshore opportunities for good investment catches

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Offshore investors must juggle a host of considerations. The Channel Islands benefit greatly from their closeness to the UK mainland as well as a common language and culture. These matters are becoming increasingly important as offshore institutions offer phone services.

David Kilshaw, tax partner at KPMG, says that the Channel Islands tend to be the first choice for UK investors, although some may favour the Bahamas for trust work designed to protect assets from inheritance and other capital transfer taxes.

The Channel Islands, he says, are also less likely now to be roped into any UK exchange controls, a fear that has traditionally sent some investors further afield.

He says that many investors have been reconsidering their offshore investment strategies since the election, but merely as a routine reassessment.

The Irish Republic benefits from a highly educated workforce and a host of tax incentives that have brought in big name institutions.

There is also the considerable fun to be had in flying to Dublin to meet your advisers or bankers. A sunny tax haven has similar secondary attractions. Bermuda, which has arguably displaced London as the world's insurance centre, is well thought of in the Caribbean region.

Political stability and the quality of one's fellow customers must be a priority, however. Some Balkan republics are trying to establish themselves as tax havens to repair their shattered economies. For the gung-ho only.

ADAM JONES

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Most major banks and building societies now have subsidiaries in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man to service the demand for offshore accounts. Customers of these institutions should not see going offshore as a means of avoiding tax on their interest. The Inland Revenue last year mounted an investigation into savers who were attempting to evade tax in this way.

Offshore institutions are not interested in small sums; most have a minimum investment of at least £1,000. The best rates are payable on amounts in excess of £10,000. Cheshire Guernsey Ltd, a subsidiary of the Cheshire Building Society, pays 6.6 per cent gross on sums of £10,000 plus, and 7.1 per cent on sums of more than

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Consumers' champion lacking

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[illegible]

Shares end sharply lower

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
10.50	10.40	10.40	10.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
10.40	10.30	10.30	10.30	0.10	0.96	13.3
10.30	10.20	10.20	10.20	0.10	0.96	13.3
10.20	10.10	10.10	10.10	0.10	0.96	13.3
10.10	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.10	0.96	13.3
10.00	9.90	9.90	9.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.90	9.80	9.80	9.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.80	9.70	9.70	9.70	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.70	9.60	9.60	9.60	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.60	9.50	9.50	9.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.50	9.40	9.40	9.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.40	9.30	9.30	9.30	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.30	9.20	9.20	9.20	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.20	9.10	9.10	9.10	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.10	9.00	9.00	9.00	0.10	0.96	13.3
9.00	8.90	8.90	8.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.90	8.80	8.80	8.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.80	8.70	8.70	8.70	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.70	8.60	8.60	8.60	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.60	8.50	8.50	8.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.50	8.40	8.40	8.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.40	8.30	8.30	8.30	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.30	8.20	8.20	8.20	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.20	8.10	8.10	8.10	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.10	8.00	8.00	8.00	0.10	0.96	13.3
8.00	7.90	7.90	7.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.90	7.80	7.80	7.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.80	7.70	7.70	7.70	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.70	7.60	7.60	7.60	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.60	7.50	7.50	7.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.50	7.40	7.40	7.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.40	7.30	7.30	7.30	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.30	7.20	7.20	7.20	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.20	7.10	7.10	7.10	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.10	7.00	7.00	7.00	0.10	0.96	13.3
7.00	6.90	6.90	6.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.90	6.80	6.80	6.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.80	6.70	6.70	6.70	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.70	6.60	6.60	6.60	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.60	6.50	6.50	6.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.50	6.40	6.40	6.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.40	6.30	6.30	6.30	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.30	6.20	6.20	6.20	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.20	6.10	6.10	6.10	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.10	6.00	6.00	6.00	0.10	0.96	13.3
6.00	5.90	5.90	5.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.90	5.80	5.80	5.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.80	5.70	5.70	5.70	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.70	5.60	5.60	5.60	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.60	5.50	5.50	5.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.50	5.40	5.40	5.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.40	5.30	5.30	5.30	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.30	5.20	5.20	5.20	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.20	5.10	5.10	5.10	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.10	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.10	0.96	13.3
5.00	4.90	4.90	4.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.90	4.80	4.80	4.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.80	4.70	4.70	4.70	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.70	4.60	4.60	4.60	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.60	4.50	4.50	4.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.50	4.40	4.40	4.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.40	4.30	4.30	4.30	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.30	4.20	4.20	4.20	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.20	4.10	4.10	4.10	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.10	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.10	0.96	13.3
4.00	3.90	3.90	3.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.90	3.80	3.80	3.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.80	3.70	3.70	3.70	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.60	3.50	3.50	3.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.50	3.40	3.40	3.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.40	3.30	3.30	3.30	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.30	3.20	3.20	3.20	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.20	3.10	3.10	3.10	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.10	3.00	3.00	3.00	0.10	0.96	13.3
3.00	2.90	2.90	2.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
2.90	2.80	2.80	2.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
2.80	2.70	2.70	2.70	0.10	0.96	13.3
2.70	2.60	2.60	2.60	0.10	0.96	13.3
2.60	2.50	2.50	2.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
2.50	2.40	2.40	2.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
2.40	2.30	2.30	2.30	0.10	0.96	13.3
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2.20	2.10	2.10	2.10	0.10	0.96	13.3
2.10	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.10	0.96	13.3
2.00	1.90	1.90	1.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
1.90	1.80	1.80	1.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
1.80	1.70	1.70	1.70	0.10	0.96	13.3
1.70	1.60	1.60	1.60	0.10	0.96	13.3
1.60	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
1.50	1.40	1.40	1.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
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1.00	0.90	0.90	0.90	0.10	0.96	13.3
0.90	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.10	0.96	13.3
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0.60	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.10	0.96	13.3
0.50	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.10	0.96	13.3
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0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.96	13.3

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CRICKET: DAY OF OBSCURE RECORDS FOR TOILING HAMPSHIRE BATSMEN

Aymes checks Surrey's advance

By Simon Wilde

GUILDFORD (third day of four): Hampshire, with two second-innings wickets in hand, are 53 runs ahead of Surrey

HAMPSHIRE have had some pretty miserable days this season and, for a long time, yesterday promised to rank among the blackest. By 4.45pm they were 71 for seven in their second innings, following on 174 behind, and had lost 12 wickets in three hours' play, an hour having been lost to a midday shower.

At that point, though, the Mr Hyde side of their personality slipped away and up popped Dr Jekyll. For the rest of the day, they fought tooth and nail to stay in the game, principally through an eighth-wicket partnership of 123 between Adrian Aymes and Simon Renshaw, both of whom — remarkably — recorded season's best scores for the second time in the day.

When they came together, Surrey could be forgiven for letting their focus slip, so feeble was the resistance that they had met. Their fielding became lax and their bowlers went through the motions, but a slow pitch remained basically sound and, once their eyes were in, Aymes and Renshaw made batting look easy again and Adam Holoake, the Surrey captain, was forced to shuffle his bowlers.

Eventually, and much to Surrey's relief, Holoake had Renshaw leg-before for 56, but Milburn kept Aymes company until the close, at which stage Hampshire were 227 for eight, 53 ahead. Surrey should still win, but Milburn can bat and Aymes, unbeaten on 83 after three hours, will relish extending their discomfort. Aymes had provided almost



Stewart carries the scars of war yesterday, but is confident of playing in the fourth Test match next week

solitary resistance when Hampshire lost their five remaining first-innings wickets earlier in the day, batting 2½ hours for 45 before being dismissed. So poorly did the Hampshire top order bat second time around that he was back at the crease within 90 minutes, the scoreboard reading 24 for five.

Credit for this must go to

Martin Bicknell, who produced a spell of four for two in 25 balls, but well as he bowled, Hampshire gave him a helping hand. Hayden had one of his aberrations, padding up to his second ball, and James repeated the error to a lavish inswinger. Laney, loosely aiming an off drive, played into his stumps.

Most remarkable, though,

was the performance of Stephenson, the Hampshire keeper, who, reports suggest, is feeling the pressure of his job. Given a reprieve before he had scored, he seemed intent on hitting his way out of trouble, with predictable results. Having lashed two fours through the covers, Tudor fed him a short ball which he hooked into the hands of long leg.

A good day for Aymes, Hampshire's wicketkeeper, was the reverse for Surrey's. Stewart taking a blow in the face an hour into the day, a ball from Salisbury flicking up off Renshaw's pad and gashing him under the right eye. He is confident of being fit for the fourth Test match next week, but did not keep again. Butcher taking his place.

Robinson adds light relief to a slow day

By Richard Horson

OLD TRAFFORD (third day of four): Sussex, with six second-innings wickets in hand, need 104 runs to avoid an innings defeat against Lancashire

CRANES have been installed at Old Trafford to hoist floodlights over the stands for the day-night Roses match next Monday. Their presence is proof of the initiatives that are being taken to woo new spectators to the sport.

The contest yesterday would have put any newcomer off for life. Sussex played the better cricket, but, despite fielding lethargically, Lancashire remain strongly positioned to secure their third successive championship win.

Following on 254 behind, Sussex at least applied themselves with more purpose than in their first innings. Bill Athey, in particular, was at his stubborn best in grinding out a half-century.

Nine years after his last appearance for England, he remains one of the most obstinate batsmen in the country. He was not off the mark until his fortieth delivery and was missed by Athey on a backward short leg after dashing along to two. Yet, in conditions that were beginning to assist the spinners — so much so that Athey bowled leg breaks for the first time this season — Athey's technique held firm. The earth shook in disbelief when he drove expansively at Yates to be bowled between bat and pad five minutes before the close.

Earlier, Rao and Lenham had fallen in successive overs, the former to a splendid leg-side catch by Hegg, standing back to Gallian, while Taylor went attempting to steer Yates past slip. Watkinson accounted for three of the five Sussex wickets at the end of the first innings, though Austin was responsible for the removal of Newell for 74. Drakes perished attempting to counter-attack, but by far the most interesting — and amusing — innings was played by Robinson, the archetypal rabbit, who smote a career-best 27. He was rewarded by being cast as nightwatchman in the second innings.

Smith and Young expose deception

By Alan Lee, Cricket Correspondent

CHELTEMHAM (third day of four): Gloucestershire (24pts) beat Derbyshire (4) by an innings and 35 runs

FOR much of an overcast morning, Derbyshire showed sufficient resolve to suggest that they might take this match well into its final day. It was a brief deception. By the time that the sun came out, an hour after lunch, this lovely ground was deserted.

It was appropriate that the two men who dominated the game, Mike Smith and Shaun Young, should bring about its abrupt end. It was equally fitting that Derbyshire should surrender their last four wickets for four runs, as their cricket here has been abysmal.

An honourable exception was Kim Barnett, who rose above his personal conflict with the club to perform noble service. He made almost half of the first-innings runs and, yesterday, was six short of a deserved century when the fall of his wicket effectively signalled the end.

Derbyshire are badly in need of cheer, so the news that Dominic Cork is accelerating his comeback will be especially welcome. Only five weeks after a groin operation

thought likely to keep him out for the season, Cork plans to play in a second-team fixture on Monday and is hoping to win a place in the quarter-final of the NatWest Trophy next week, as a specialist batsman.

He can hardly fare worse than some who played here. The fourth-wicket stand of 121 between Barnett and Vandrau was no more than an inconvenience to the home side and Young, despite being bowled sparingly due to a hamstring problem, dispatched Barnett and Clarke in successive balls and almost bowled Krikken for a hat-trick. When Vandrau was well caught at second slip, Young had taken three for four, and only some defiant blows from DeFreitas delayed the inevitable.

Smith returned to take three of the last four wickets and complete match figures of ten for 106. His first-class match should be the Headingley Test. Gloucestershire, meanwhile, remain among the leaders, but it is a mystery why the first game of the Cheltenham Festival, played on one of the truest pitches in England, has now been over before tea on the third day for three successive years.

Scarborough far from fair for irate Boon

SCARBOROUGH (third day of four): Yorkshire (24pts) beat Durham (4) by an innings and 56 runs

DAVID BYAS, the Yorkshire captain, was not making any apologies yesterday after a pitch tailored to his specifications had left Scarborough, his own club, without any cricket on what should have been one of the big days of their famous festival (Pat Gibson writes).

Durham had been beaten by lunchtime on what their captain, David Boon, called the most extraordinary pitch he had seen in 20 years in the game. It was thickly grassed in the middle but bare at the ends, and Boon said: "It is to the benefit of nobody in the long term. It gives the bowlers a false sense of their worth and undermines the batsmen's confidence."

Byas countered: "I am not saying that this is the way forward for English cricket,

but it is the way for us to play county cricket here. All the years I have been playing for Yorkshire, people have been telling me that we would never get results at Scarborough, but we have proved otherwise in the past two seasons."

Yorkshire were hoist by their own petard the first time that they tried the two-tone pitch last year, Caddick bowling Somerset to victory. Yorkshire demolished Nottinghamshire later in the summer, though, and now that Durham have gone the same way, Sussex can expect a similar surface when they visit here next month.

Durham needed 159 to make Yorkshire bat again with only five wickets left. Bens, with 35, and Boiling, with 40, his highest championship score, put up a better fight than some of the batsmen and, in the end, occasional bowlers, McGrath and Lehmann, completed the job.

Leicestershire drawn into gambling game

By Jack Bailey

CANTERBURY (third day of four): Leicestershire, with all second-innings wickets in hand, need 345 runs to beat Kent

A DAY of praiseworthy endeavour from both teams, to create something of this rain-affected match, ended with less being achieved on the field than in the pavilion. The machinations of the captains resulted in agreement by Steve Marsh, the Kent captain, not to

enforce the follow-on if James Whitaker declared, which he did, after batting for 40 overs and when Leicestershire had scored 160 for four.

This left them the small matter of 338 runs behind Kent's first innings — Marsh having declared at the overnight 593 for eight — or still 189 short of the follow-on figure. Then Marsh declared a second time after facing all of five overs, leaving Leicestershire finally to score 365 from a likely 105 overs. It is a run chase weighted towards Kent, as it should be. Without

Kent's declarations, Leicestershire were on a hiding to nothing. Leicestershire have now lost more than 1,450 overs to the weather, have drawn all their matches except against Hampshire, which they won, and are short of points with which to defend their title. For them, almost any gamble was worth the candle.

Before Whitaker and Johnson came together in an enterprising partnership of 99 for the fourth wicket, it looked as though Leicestershire might well be scuppered by orthodox means. Once

Thompson got his outswinger going, he removed both Wells and Maddy and, when Fleming uprooted Sutcliffe's middle stump, by way of an inside edge, three were down for 39.

What may well turn out to be the catch of the season by Strang at deep mid-off had accounted for Wells, but then came Johnson with 72 from 75 balls. A good effort from Whitaker ended with another fine catch, this time by Fulton at short leg. After that, a flurry of declarations. Now, everything depends on the weather.

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Smith and Young
Expose deception

CRICKET

Glamorgan unable to home in on target

By IVO TENNANT

CARDIFF (final day of three): Glamorgan drew with the Australians

THE Australians left Glamorgan too onerous a task yesterday. Mindful, perhaps, that their one defeat by a county in a first-class match came when they set Derbyshire a fair target in the early stages of this tour, they did not declare until lunch. The championship leaders needed 333 off a minimum of 59 overs and settled for a draw with 122 runs still required and eight overs remaining.

Steve James, who made an excellent 79 to go with his 91 in the first innings, became the first batsman in the country to reach 1,000 runs this summer, and in so doing enhanced his chances of playing for England one day. He does not need to concern himself with whether or not he is a part of a fashionable county: when he marries his fiancée in September, Michael Atherton will be among the ushers.

At the Glamorgan needed a further 224 off a minimum of 30 overs, which was an awful lot. Morris and James had begun with 96 off 26 overs — a sound enough start — but Maynard chose not to come in at first wicket down, preferring to send in the left-handed Thomas to have a slog. When he was nearly snuffed by Berry off a leg-side full toss from Bevan, the asking rate was still seven an over.

Morris had struck seven fours in his 42, a rather more productive innings than he had managed on Thursday. As for James, he batted still more freely. When he had made 15, he became the first batsman to 1,000 runs, which was achieved about three weeks later than is customarily the case. Conceivably it has never occurred so far into a season.

James has had 15 first-class

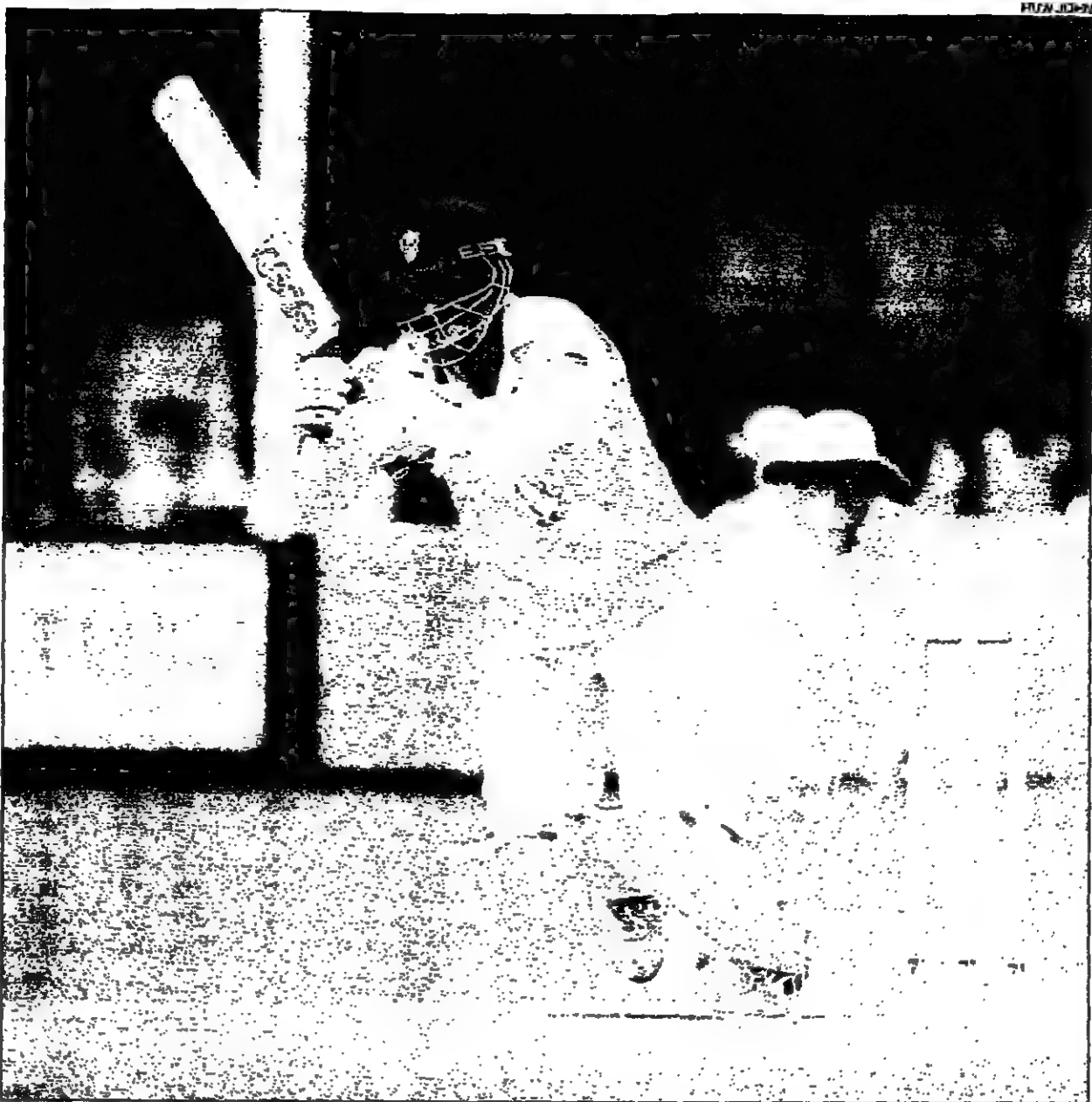
innings. He leaves in his wake two Australians, Matthew Hayden, of Hampshire, and Darren Lehmann, of Yorkshire, so that is something, too. James made, in all, 79 off 116 balls with 11 fours before he pulled a short ball from Bevan, a long hop even, to mid-wicket. It was remarkably similar to his dismissal in his first innings.

Maynard did come in when Thomas was out. He drove Kaspravic for six over long-on, a terrific shot achieved with minimal backlift that owed everything to timing and strength of forearms. There were also one or two drives that were reminiscent of his strokeplay when the Australians last came to Glamorgan four years ago. His century then led to a brief recall to Test cricket.

Alas for him, he could not manage any more pyrotechnics now. Also, Dale took 19 balls to get off the mark and was unable to force the ball away after that. When the last hour's play began, 156 were required off the statutory 15 overs and that was too much even for Maynard.

The declaration could, and probably should, have been more imaginative. The Australians, though, were already focused on more important matters at Headingley next week. Last night they returned to London to play Middlesex, their final match before the fourth Test.

They had delayed declaring until Blewett, as well as Reiffel, had made a half-century. The pitch was just giving Bevan's chinamen, nor, for that matter, anybody of quicker pace, any assistance and Warne was not playing. What he was doing, in fact, was signing autographs for a good half an hour for no end of small children. It won him, considerable appreciation from another excellent crowd.



James on-drives elegantly to the boundary and becomes the first batsman to score 1,000 runs this season

Astle continues to give good value

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

TRENT BRIDGE (third day of four): Nottinghamshire, with six second-innings wickets in hand, are 68 runs ahead of Warwickshire

NATHAN ASTLE walked to the crease yesterday three overs after lunch, when Paul Johnson retired hurt with a bruised finger. Nottinghamshire were 39 for one in their second innings, and effectively three wickets down as the other Paul, Pollard, had broken the middle finger of his left hand on Thursday, and is expected to miss the rest of the season.

Astle cared not a jot that his team had just been bowled out for 133, and needed to find another 172 runs to make

Warwickshire bat for a second time. By tea, Astle, recruited as recently as June 4, had reached a truly excellent hundred and, though he perished in the first over afterwards, he had given everybody a vigorous account of himself.

The New Zealander has certainly given good value in his first month at Trent Bridge. He made 99 against the Australians and his half-century, and tight bowling, enabled Nottinghamshire to beat Surrey at the Oval in a low-scoring NatWest Trophy tie.

His innings yesterday was only the second century by a Nottinghamshire batsman in the championship this season. Matthew Downman, who made the first, came within a boundary hit of another before

he was leg-before to Graeme Welch.

English teams are already familiar with Astle. In the opening game of the World Cup last year, he made a bracing hundred, and he obstructed them in "Morrison's match", at Auckland in January, when his undefeated century helped the Duck King to save the day.

He is not afraid to challenge the bowlers' authority. Yesterday, with the boundary on the Bridgeford Road side of the ground no more than 60 yards square of the wicket, and with the field set for wicket-taking rather than containment, he cut loose from the start, going to his fifty in 42 balls before he reached his century in 112.

Had Penney clung on to a sharp chance at third slip,

Astle would have made 96 runs fewer. Donald, the bowler, was at his hostile best in that spell, and a fine sight he made. Funny enough, however, it was Michael Bell, the left-armers playing his first championship match for two years, who sent Pollard and Johnson for repairs.

Astle added 170 in 38 overs with Downman before he was beautifully caught at second slip by Osler. Downman, who had played pretty well going in first, was leg-before as he tried to work Welch through mid-wicket.

That was Welch's second wicket of the innings, and his fourth of the day. Like Brown, the other emerging all-rounder, Welch is growing nicely into a team that is acquiring a fresh identity.

Sales and Curran take fight to Essex

By BARNES SPENDER

NORTHAMPTON (third day of four): Northamptonshire, with two second-innings wickets in hand, are 305 runs ahead of Essex

THIS season Northamptonshire have struggled to fulfil the expectations of their supporters but, if they go on to record their second championship win today, they can take a well-earned bow. They have battled hard and shown that they can fight as tenaciously as anyone.

Although David Sales took centre stage yesterday, there were impressive supporting roles from Kevin Curran and Malachi Loye, who shared a partnership of 48 that ended with both of them in the medical ward.

Loye played beautifully to reach 43. But when he turned quickly for a second run, he hit the deck, clutching his side as if shot by a sniper. He may be wheeled into action this morning but, if the early prognosis of torn ligaments of the lower back proves correct, it may spell the end of his season.

Shortly afterwards, Curran, on 28, was also back in the pavilion after being struck a painful blow on his right hand by Danny Law. After a swift changing-room operation to drain the blood from the thumb, he returned to the crease but by then Paul Grayson and Ashley Cowan had reduced Northamptonshire to 182 for eight. However, Curran showed great pluck in staying with Sales to the close and won a mini-battle when Law returned. Predictably, the first ball was a bouncer and Curran pulled it savagely to the boundary.

Sales, who has found runs hard to come by this summer, was also in the mood. He smashed one straight drive back past Law and then hooked Cowan out of the ground. He reached his 50 off 111 balls and by the close had moved to 63, his highest of the season. If Northamptonshire do clinch it, their captain, Rob Bailey, will recall the match with mixed feelings. He completed his first pair for the county yesterday to set alongside the one he collected in the second of his four Tests, in Trinidad in 1991.

Hick makes the most of acquiescent opposition

By JOHN THICKKENSE

WORCESTER (final day of three): Worcestershire drew with Pakistan A

WORCESTERSHIRE saved their game against Pakistan A without coming under pressure at New Road and, on a blameless pitch, it was no surprise that Graeme Hick scored 144, his 93rd first-class hundred, one behind C.B. Fry. The innings contained some memorable strokes, none more remarkable than a six into the road in which the follow-through hardly reached waist height, so sweetly did he time it.

All the same, it must have been among the luckiest hundreds of Hick's career: at 94, he was dropped just inside the extra-cover boundary by a fielder who did not have to move. Eighty minutes later, when he holed out at long leg, there were five sixes and 30 fours to Hick's credit off 153 balls, his runs coming out of 232.

Commanding as he was, though, his runs were made against all-too-acquiescent opposition. Umens were favourable when Solanki, overconfident, threw away his wicket after half an hour and, 20 minutes later, when Weston retired hurt after being hit on the foot by Shoaib Akhtar, Worcestershire needed another 155 to save an innings defeat. However, the Pakistanis drooped when Hick edged Razvi just wide of second slip, who then dropped Spirling run-handed off the same bowler.

Akhtar deserved Spirling's wicket off a thick edge square of gully. But it spoke volumes for the touring team's state of mind that when Akhtar stopped a Hick drive with his foot, it took eight minutes before the game restarted, three of them elapsing while Akhtar hobbled off the field.

Returning to be hit by Hick for 16 in the first over after lunch, Akhtar later sent Leatherdale to hospital for stitches to his mouth, through ducking into a short ball that skidded through chest-high. Like Weston, though, who was padded up to hat had another wicket fallen, Leatherdale is expected to be fit for the Axa Life League game against Glamorgan tomorrow.

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Caddie stands firm behind master golfer after error at 10th hole costs four strokes

Woods meets his match in the vagaries of Troon

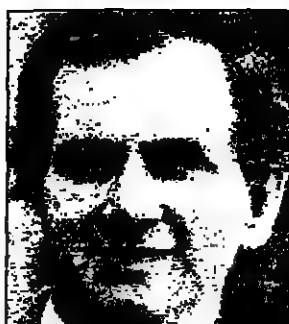
HOW splendidly, and sometimes capriciously, does the game of golf mimic the patterns of life. Tiger Woods crossed the Atlantic last week justifiably labelled the finest young golfer in the world: indeed, he may prove to be the best yet born. Yet Royal Troon has the measure of him.

In the fierce winds of Thursday, he was trapped at the 11th, where he took seven shots. In the calm, clear, sunlit morning yesterday, this immaculate golfer took eight shots, four over par, to sink his ball at the 10th hole... and he made the cut for the remaining two rounds only through a birdie at the 18th, a final achievement that showed his character, calculation and inspiration.

It is reassuring, in a way, to see a phenomenon dismissed by a course on the Scottish coastline that has been teasing and testing men and women through the century. This is the art, the allure of golf: the course confounds man, examines his ability and his temperament to the limits, humbles him just when he has 50 million reasons — dollars in the bank — to presume the mantle of greatness. I wish Woods no ill will. At 21, he merits triumph and disaster, at least in the public glare after his rounds, articulately, with equanimity, and a measure of modesty. However, it was astonishing, at the 10th yesterday, the way that a cathedral quiet was cast around the hole as, caught in Troon's long rough, he was reduced to an ordinary being.

It was not Woods alone. In August, a couple of months ago, where he had so majestically strode away from the field, it was a tale of the Tiger and the Walrus. At his side, nursing him, reading the greens to perfection for him, relaxing him, was Mike "Fluff" Cowan, the experienced caddy with the drooping white moustache. At his side in the ravine of Troon is again Cowan, though in this

ROB HUGHES



At Royal Troon

the master golfer and the bag carrier are like novices. Cowan confirmed after the round yesterday that he and his man had never been to Troon before this week.

More than that, Cowan would not disassociate himself from Woods's moment of vulnerability. "It started with a very bad shot, but we both chose the club, an eight-iron, and we both liked it," he said. The instant that Woods hit the ball, however, he exclaimed: "Oh no! Good God!" That club, used for the second shot at the 438-yard hole, projected the ball beyond the green and deep into long rye grass, backing on to gorse bushes. "At the back of the green, I was in some pretty thick stuff, with a gorse bush right behind me," Woods said. "I tried to play a shot to the front of the green with a sand-wedge. I whiffed it, my club went right underneath the ball."

The ball moved three inches. He hacked at it again, moved it perhaps six yards, and then, borne out of pique from a talented player so unaccustomed to this Scottish rough, he used the wedge a third time, propelled the ball hastily and violently, up and over the green to the other side. From there, he chipped shallowly towards the green and then two-putted.

Making matters worse, the scoreboard overlooking that hole kept relating to Woods and Cowan that Darren Clarke was burning up the course, using the same becalmed morning conditions to hit birdie after birdie, six of them on the outward nine.

The surface of Troon, combed by gentler winds yesterday, is as like the smooth and wide fairways of manicured Augusta as French red clay is like Wimbledon grass. Maybe that was why Cowan seemed to become distant from his employer on the greens yesterday, a separation that was not helped by a round of golf that produced barely a semblance of joy.

Woods struggled from the 1st, where, with his short iron, he fluffed the approach to the green. He was then to miss vital putts, from two feet on the 3rd green and from even closer on the 8th, where he completely misread the lie.

In elements friendly to the golfer, the galleries, rather than the expectant hordes who whoop wherever Woods strides in the United States, were bystanders of curiosity: waiting for the magic, willing to judge the man not on his reputation but on what he did before them.

Again, the caddy protected his player. "It is your expectations, not ours," Cowan said. "I learnt a long time ago that you don't play this game with expectations, you go play." Then, cancelling his own planned recreational round in the afternoon, Cowan said: "Tiger hit more fairways and more greens today than he did yesterday, but it's a game of putts and, in my opinion, the score [74] reflects only that the putts didn't go in."

For a day, then, the mood of the Tiger drooped like the moustache of the Walrus. He lives to play another round today, and I do hope that the small boy, clad from cap to trainers in Tiger Woods Nike apparel, can be brought back to witness a recharged icon.



The day's work over, Woods is left to ponder on his battle with Troon that will continue this morning

Sultan of swing looks in dire straits

There is something faintly irritating about the turgid sameness that permeates the modern world of sport. Tennis, for example, has its two-fisted backhands, cricket its uniformly boring medium-pace howlers: see one, and you have seen them all. In golf, too, technique is everything, so it is perversely pleasant to encounter a player whose method is totally, relentlessly and wonderfully daft.

The misfit in question is Jim Furyk, a 27-year-old American who might have been born to fit Walter Hagen's maxim that "It's not how, it's how many." If golf scores were based on style, Furyk would have a job to break 100.

The modest Pennsylvanian, who has played a leading part in the first two rounds of the Open Championship, has a swing that is all his own, which is just as well since nobody else would want it even if he were giving it away. A golf swing should have as few moving parts as possible: Furyk's has so many that it is a small wonder that bits do not fly off him when he hits the ball.

Mel Webb applauds as the coaching manual is brutally ripped to shreds

His swing is a wondrous, loopy swipe that makes him look like a mad axeman threshing wheat. At the top of the backswing there is something that almost defies description: it is a swirl, a flourish, a twiddle, a whist that says more clearly than a thousand words: "Whoops, there's something going wrong up there, let's adjust before we fall over."

The Furyk fluid has been described in many ways, the most memorable of which was undoubtedly coined by David Feherty, erstwhile Europe Ryder Cup player and now a television commentator in the United States, who said that the swing looked like an octopus falling out of a tree. Somebody else said Furyk resembled a man trying to kill a snake in a telephone box. It is Basil Fawley, Monty Python and Max Wall all wrapped up in

one gloriously eccentric package that comes directly from the Ministry of Silly Golf Swings.

People with swings like this usually come by them naturally: nobody taught Eamonn Darcy or Russell Claydon, the two leading European purveyors of side-splittingly comical swings, how to do it. No sane person could. Yet Furyk claims that he was actually taught to hit the ball like that by his father, who, as the man who as the man responsible for causing innocent spectators to suffer hernias from laughing as they watch his son hit a golf ball, has a lot to answer for.

The strangest thing of all is that it works beautifully. Furyk goes into the third round today in a good position on three under par. He might look funny, but his ball-striking ability is no laughing matter.

He is seventh on the order of merit and sixth in the Ryder Cup list: spectators at Valderrama in September are in for a treat. As long, that is, as they remember to pack a truss. It's not how, remember. It's how many.



Furyk's eccentric swing has been described as resembling an octopus falling out of a tree by David Feherty

Jester Parnevik is happy to stand out from crowd

By PATRICIA DAVIES

JESPER PARNEVIK, known for his brim, his vim and his aversion to leaderboards, played well-nigh immaculate golf in the shimmering sunshine at Royal Troon yesterday to return a second-round score of 66, five under par, for a total of 136, six under.

The skippy, cerebral Swede — he purges his system every month or so with a diet of volcanic sand and prefers reading Oriental philosophy to the latest potboiler — is very much out of the ordinary, off and on the course. He was the only man to break par on the inward nine in the brutal wind on Thursday, despite a double-bogey six at the 11th. He came home in 34, one under par, with birdies at the last three holes — and four of the last five — yet he set off with a different putter yesterday.

"My game and putting felt terrible," Parnevik said, "so I changed from a Callaway to an STX, a strange putter with a rubber insert." So strange that he hit his first putt 12 feet past the hole and missed the next to drop a shot. It was just about his only error.

He hit every green in regulation, bar the par-five 4th, where he was on in two and holed from ten feet for an eagle, and the 18th, where he drove into the rough, put his second shot into a pot bunker and did well to blast out on to the front edge of the green, 45 feet from the hole. Three putts looked likely, given the humps and hollows to be negotiated — Parnevik's estimate was 15 feet of break — but he needed only one.



Parnevik: eagle at 4th

"Things like that you're going to remember all year," he said. "It's the sort of thing that happens in this tournament. It is pretty much the only tournament that makes your hair stand up when you play in it."

At the age of 33, Parnevik, now 32, announced that he was going to win the Open and three years ago, at Turnberry, he very nearly did. Inexperienced in the ways of major championships, he did not look at the scoreboard, preferring to assess the position by ear rather than eye, misjudged the situation and bogeyed the last, losing to Nick Price by one shot. Parnevik looks at scoreboards now.

For a man hard to label, he is replete with logos and his clothing — designed by Johan Lindebergh — features the outline of a golf-gloved hand. He is also immediately recognisable because of the

upturned peak of his cap, a fact that started because he wanted to tan his pale forehead and has developed — from minor idiosyncrasy to big business. SAP America is writing large on it and is not a reference to the wearer's dapper tendencies, but the name of a German computer software company.

This search for an identity of his own owes much to being the son of Bo Parnevik, a comedian who is a celebrity in Sweden and a golf nut, who hit floating balls into the lake behind their home with his son. In his early days, Parnevik Jr, who described the game as "mind-boggling, maddening and frustrating," would always opt for the spectacular shot and go nuts if it did not work.

Now, happily married to Mia and father of two daughters, Penny, two, and Peg (in Swedish her name means "tee") — typical Parnevik, according to his companions, two months, Parnevik is more at ease with himself and it is reflected in his golf.

He won the Landmark Trophy by five shots from Colin Montgomerie last September, then took three months off before coming third in the Bob Hope Classic. He has since been second four times in the United States and earned nearly \$800,000. "He's got to be on the Ryder Cup team," a spectator said yesterday.

Parnevik, who is not a member of the PGA European Tour, needs Severiano Ballesteros, the Europe captain, to pick him but, in the meantime, very much his father's son, the Swede is happy to put on his own show.

EARLY OPEN SCORES

Great Britain and Ireland unless stated

132: D Clarke 67, 68
135: J Leonard (US) 69, 68
136: J Parnevik (Swe) 70, 66
137: F Couples (US) 69, 68
138: J Furyk (US) 67, 72; T Kile (US) 72, 67
140: A Cabrera (Arg) 70, 70
141: J Haas (US) 71, 70; T Watson (US) 71, 70; M Calzaghe (US) 74, 67
142: C Strange (US) 71, 71; D Duval (US) 73, 68; P Leonard (US) 72, 70; G Norman (Aus) 69, 73; E Romero (Arg) 74, 68
143: J Lomas 72, 71; M James 76, 67; P O'Malley (Aus) 73, 70; T Purser (US) 72, 71; L Westwood 73, 70; S Maruyama (Japan) 74, 69; S Ames (Ire) 74, 69; J M O'Shaughnessy (Sri) 75, 68
144: E Els (SA) 75, 69; N Faldo 71, 73; P Michael 75, 69; P Harrington 75, 69; B Faxon (US) 77, 67; P Mickelson (US) 76, 68; S Appleby (Aus) 76, 72; B Hovland 74, 74; J Kelly (US) 76, 68; R Goosen (SA) 75, 69; R Russell 72, 72; I Woosnam 71, 73; R Alenby (Aus) 76, 68
145: Michael Bradley (US) 72, 73; T Toles (US) 77, 68; J Payne 74, 71; J Maggert (US) 76, 69; S Sorensen (US) 72, 73; M McIlroy (Ire) 70, 67; C Montgomerie 76, 68; W Riley (Aus) 74, 71
146: P Nobbs (NZ) 74, 72; T Lehman (US) 75, 72; V Singh (Fiji) 77, 69; T Woods (US) 72, 74; B Langer (Ger) 72, 74; R Davis (Aus) 73, 70; P Tormey 75, 71; M O'Meara (US) 73, 73; P Senior (Aus) 76, 70
147: D A Russell 75, 75; S Jones (US) 73, 73; C Pavin (US) 78, 69; G Turner (NZ) 78, 71; J Spence 78, 69; P McGilver 78, 70; J Johnson (Swe) 72, 73; J Nicklaus (US) 73, 74; P Stewart (US) 73, 74

OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP '97

148: G Orr 78, 72; M Wiebe (US) 73, 76; M Long (NZ) 78, 70; S Elkington (Aus) 78, 72; P Hedberg (Swe) 78, 72; G Brand 78, 72; C Mason 78, 70; P Fuke (Swe) 73, 75; D Howell 76, 72; W Westner (SA) 76, 74; A Calcutt 78, 72; D Robertson 78, 72
149: L Jansen (US) 78, 71; C Stadler (US) 78, 71; G Player (SA) 78, 71; C Perry (Aus) 79, 70; R Cannon (US) 78, 73; P Baker 79, 70; B Watts (US) 78, 74; C Watson 78, 78; T Bjorn (Den) 76, 73; P Broadhurst 75, 74; L Roberts (US) 78, 73
150: C Rocca (Ire) 75, 76; N Price (Zim) 78, 72; M Brooke (US) 80, 70; G Dew (US) 78, 73; D O'Quinn (US) 77, 73; S McCann (US) 73, 77
151: I Garrido (Esp) 78, 72; M A Martin (Esp) 78, 72; J Shaw-Walker (Fiji) 78, 73; P Blackmer (US) 78, 76; J Cook (US) 76, 78
152: W Shotton 78, 74; M A Jimenez (Esp) 82, 70; K Nishimura (Jpn) 77, 75; L Batchelor 77, 75; C Clark 78, 73; S Torrance 78, 74
153: A Cramer 78, 77; D Olsson (Swe) 82, 73; M J Brand 78, 75; G Dodd (Aus) 78, 75; S Webster 75, 78; A Lyle 78, 75; J van de Velde 79, 73
154: P Haugenud (Nor) 78, 76; M Miller 82, 72
155: D Hart (US) 78, 77; R Green (Aus) 80, 78; K Eriksson (Swe) 85, 70
156: G Murphy 84, 78; P Sankowski (US) 80, 76; S Mori (Japan) 80, 76
157: P Sorensen (US) 79, 79
158: D Frost (SA) 81, 77; M Mearns (Sri) 83, 78
159: S Young 78, 80; R Jacquelin (Fiji) 81, 77
161: A Calkins (Ger) 81, 80
162: N Sato (Japan) 86, 78
163: D Edlund (Swe) 87, 77; J Miller 80, 84
Withdrawn: J O'Shaughnessy, Y Kaneko (Japan), C Perry (US)

Three join fallen champion

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

NAOMICHI OZAKI and Yoshinori Kaneko, both of Japan, and Chris Perry, of the United States, withdrew from the second round because of injuries. Ozaki has a wrist injury and Kaneko a back problem; Perry is suffering from a thigh injury.

They joined Ian Baker-Finch, of Australia, a winner of the Open at Royal Birkdale in 1991, who withdrew after a 21-over-par 92 in the opening round.

Dennis Edlund and Daniel Olsson, both of Sweden, made holes in one yesterday. Edlund at the 8th, the 126-yard Postage Stamp — the shortest hole on the Open rota of courses — with a nine-iron.

Gene Sarazen, of the United States, a winner of the Open at Troon, was 70 when he made a hole in one at the Postage Stamp in 1982.

Edlund's shot did not help him beat the halfway cut. Olsson, an amateur, made a hole in one at the 210-yard 5th with a five-iron. On Thursday, another Swede, Pierre Fulke, holed in one at the 179-yard 14th, a week after he made a hole in one in the opening round of the Loch Lomond World Invitational.

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Titleist

Clarke leaves Open rivals in his wake

Yet, for all this flurry of low scores, there were still only ten men under par as play drew to a close, as there had been at the end of the much more difficult opening day. Jim Furyk, the overnight leader with Clarke, went backwards after a 72, as did Greg Norman after a 73. Tiger Woods ran up an eight on the 10th hole and it took a typically courageous long putt that he rammed home on the 18th green to ensure he reached the last two rounds. Davis Love III started at nine

At least he hit the ball seven times for his seven. Tom Lehman, the American striving to make a decent fist of defending his title, hit only five strokes on the 2nd yet ended up with a seven on his card. Having been asked to mark his ball by Vijay Singh, a playing partner, he moved his marker the length of his putter head away from Singh's line and then replaced his ball in the wrong

Clarke, his name standing proudly at the top of the leaderboard, lines up his putt on the 17th green yesterday

Meanwhile, Barclay Howard, who featured strongly on the leaderboard on Thursday, became certain to win the silver medal for the best amateur performance. He added a 74 to the one-under-par 70 that he scored in the first round to finish on 144, two over par. The other six amateurs in the field went out

Pierre Fulke's on the 14th on Thursday was followed by an ace by Dennis Edlund at the 8th in the second round and then a third ace by Daniel Olsson on the 5th a few hours

[illegible]

Leonard: improving

If BSkyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, which owns *The Times*, is effectively prevented from bidding, the BBC will be able to retain Test cricket for substantially less than its market value, simply through an absence of opposition. Should its hands remain tied, the ECB estimates that television income could drop to as little as £12 million a year, instead of £12 million the hoped-for advance to £30 million or more by the millennium, and the consequences of such a fall in revenue would be severe.

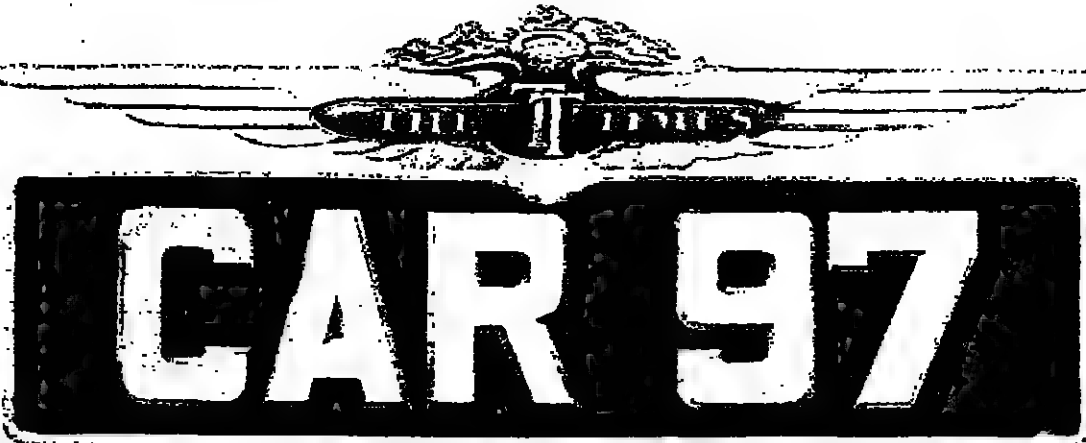
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Men who
put the
magic in
Mercedes'
mini

Page 3



For sale:
racing car
with a
history
of murder

Page 5



SATURDAY JULY 19 1997

Alan Copps experiences time travel at the wheel of a turbocharged giant from Crewe



Paintwork and leather samples for customers to choose from at Burton House in Sheffield. "Our customers are used to commissioning things like clothes, jewellery, even yachts," says Graham Lenden

Bentley goes back to the future

I looked to my experienced eye like a 20-minute queue. But the curse of London's Blackwall Tunnel struck hard this time and we were obliged to sit and chat in air-conditioned comfort for at least an hour while the children in the back seats watched almost the entire video of *Fantasia*.

There's a lot to be said for driving a modern Bentley in such circumstances. At one time, a die-hard Bentley enthusiast might mutter at this point "and not a lot to be said at any other time". But even the band who revere the marque's founder "W.O." as an automotive saint and have mourned ever since Rolls-Royce took over the company in 1931 would agree these days.

The car in question was a Bentley Turbo RT, one of a number of new four-door Rolls-Royce and Bentley models launched last week and it was when the traffic cleared that its merits were best appreciated. After all, if you're paying around £140,000 for a car you have every right to expect top-class leather and finest walnut, lambswool rugs, a cocktail cabinet, fridge, in-car video, CD player, built-in mobile phone and seats like armchairs.

But you might just raise an eyebrow when you put your foot down and the whole 24 tons of Blenheim Palace on wheels hits 60mph in less than six seconds. I regret to say there was nowhere that I could test the 150mph "governed" maximum speed. But if you told me this space ship could reach warp factor 9.8 and beat the *Starship Enterprise* to the Delta Quadrant, I'd believe it. My American guests were impressed as we made up time on the way to our picnic at Leeds Castle in Kent (hungry from the delay, my daughter jumped into the boot to eat).

What Rolls-Royce has done to the Bentley marque in the last 15 years is an example of time travel. The basic shape has not changed greatly since the cars were open to criticism as simply rebadged Rolls-Royces, but the character has changed radically back towards the cars that W.O. made. Ray Wiltshire, President of the Bentley Drivers Club, and as likely to be

seen at the wheel of a vintage Le Mans "blower" as a modern "space ship" says: "I'm delighted with the way the company has been returning to the roots of the marque. I think the spirit they are bringing to its revival is tremendous."

Bentleys now account for 60 per cent of the company's sales worldwide and what the Turbo RT shows is that the magic breathed on two-door models like the Continental T and convertible Azure can be successfully translated to four-door models. The heart of that change must lie in the turbocharging of the 6.75-litre V8 engine, boosting power to a mighty 400bhp. Advances in roadholding and handling have



My daughter jumped into the boot for her picnic

kept pace with sheer power and for such a hefty package the car is astonishingly agile.

But in launching this latest range of four-door models, the company has taken another step back to the future by emphasising the degree to which buyers can "bespoke" their cars. Of course, there's never been a Rolls-Royce or Bentley that wasn't bespoke to a greater or lesser degree. In days gone by both companies would build only running chassis and any buyer would go to his favoured coachbuilder to commission bodywork and fittings. Now by stepping up the operations of coachbuilders Mulliner Park Ward at its Crewe factory the company is offering a great deal more of this service directly.

"Rolls-Royce is the only British-owned marque in the world's top ten recognised brands. We've got to be very special. The first step to a bespoke car is to sit down with a designer and explore the purpose for which a customer wants a car," says Graham Lenden, Chief Executive of Rolls-Royce Motors.

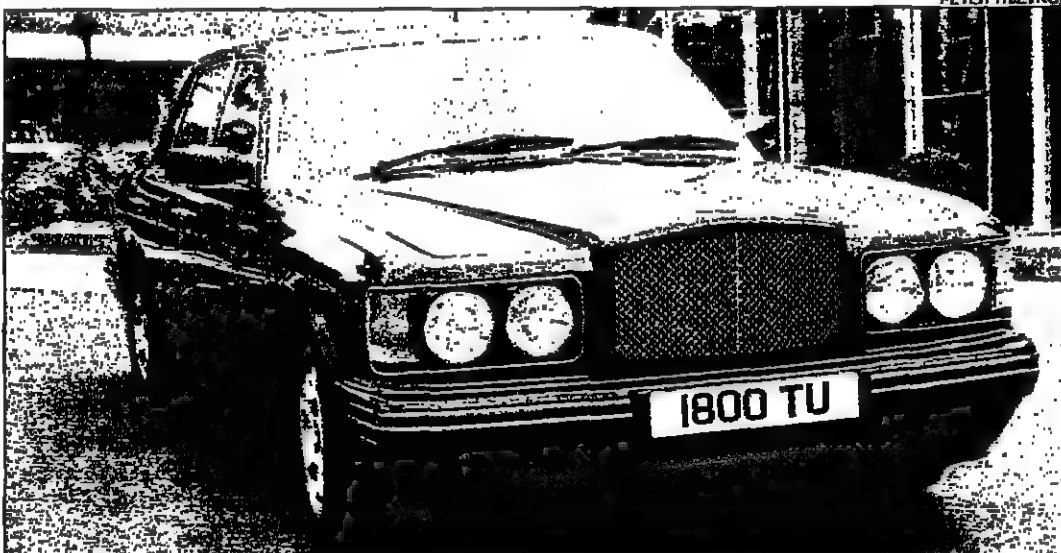
Graham Lenden, product marketing manager, says: "We want visiting the factory to be part of the experience. It's like going to your favourite tailor. We are in the high luxury sector. Our customers are used to commissioning things like clothes, jewellery, art, even yachts."

The extreme examples of commissioning the company quotes are the "Talamo Bentley", a Continental R in stripped-out racing form ordered by Italian dealer Carlo Talamo, and the ultimate Rolls-Royce Park Ward, a limousine with wheelbase extended by 48ins and laden with special equipment for a ruler in the Far East.

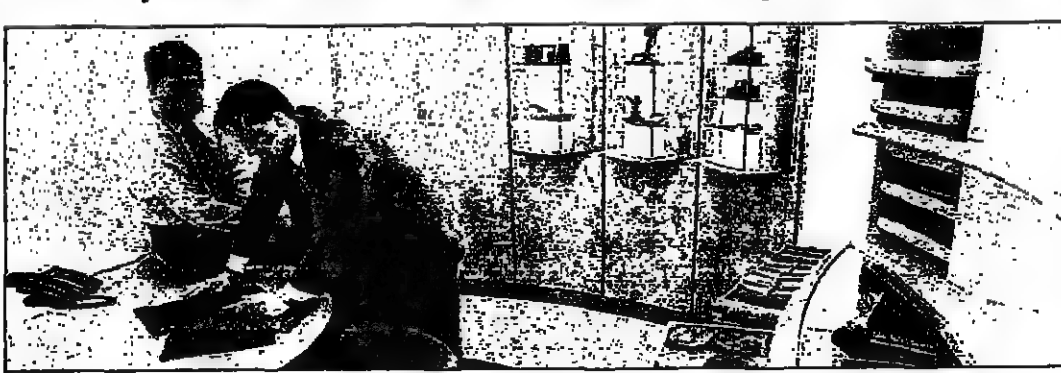
About 1,000 potential customers visited the Crewe factory last year. But to make it easier to involve them in design the "bespoke" treatment is being extended to dealers. A pilot project at Burton House in Sheffield has proved enormously successful. "We opened our doors five months ago and have sold 32 cars, 17 Bentley Turbos, two Azures, two Continentals, six Brooklands, three Rolls-Royce Silver Spurs and two Silver Dawns. But only one was to be chauffeur driven," says general manager John Mason.

The showroom has separate Rolls-Royce and Bentley commissioning booths with choices of everything from paintwork to piping. The idea has worked so well that the company has produced its own limited edition Continental named the Chatsworth after the stately home of a customer, the Duke of Devonshire.

With its hide-covered top rails, black chrome and angled central console, it's a strikingly modern car for a "traditional" maker and at £245,000 about £20,000 more than the basic car. When I arrived the boxer Prince Naseem Hamed, fresh from a prang in a Ferrari, had just been out on a test drive.



The Bentley Turbo RT is a Blenheim Palace on wheels that hits 60mph in less than six seconds



Burton House: "We opened five months ago and have sold 32 cars — only one chauffeur driven"

Silver Ghost, gold quality

Lord Montagu recalls the launch by his father of the most famous Rolls-Royce model in 1908

When my father switched on the electric current to inaugurate the new Derby factory of Rolls-Royce — "the most perfectly equipped motor works in the kingdom" — on 9 July 1908, he remarked: "There is one reason why I think the Rolls-Royce is the best car in the world and that is because I have just ordered one myself."

That statement was all the more remarkable since it was only four years since Henry Royce had built his first car. However, demand for Rolls-Royce cars had quickly outstripped the capacity of Royce's factory in Cooke Street, Manchester. This in any case had been established for the manufacture of the "dynamos, motors and kindred articles", which had made Henry Royce's name as an electrical engineer, and a "sort of guerilla warfare" was waged between Royce and his works manager over whether mechanics should work on motor cars or the electric cranes which were the mainstay of the business.

Cars might have remained a sideline to the activities of Royce and company had it not been for the arrival on the scene of the Hon C.S. Rolls, third son of Lord Llangatock. Rolls had been one of Britain's first private motorists, and in 1903 had set up in business as a supplier of motor cars to the well-to-do, a business in which he was joined by the former secretary of the Automobile Club, Claude Johnson. The refined qualities of Royce's first car had appealed to Rolls and Johnson, even though it was only a 10hp two-cylinder model, and they agreed to take all his production, which they sold under the name "Rolls Royce".

At first, Rolls-Royce had offered a complex range of cars — 10hp twins, 15hp three, 20hp fours and 30hp six-cylinders — which had been compounded in 1905 by the addition of a V8 power unit used in the short-lived "Legalimit" — which was designed to be incapable of exceeding the 20mph speed restriction!

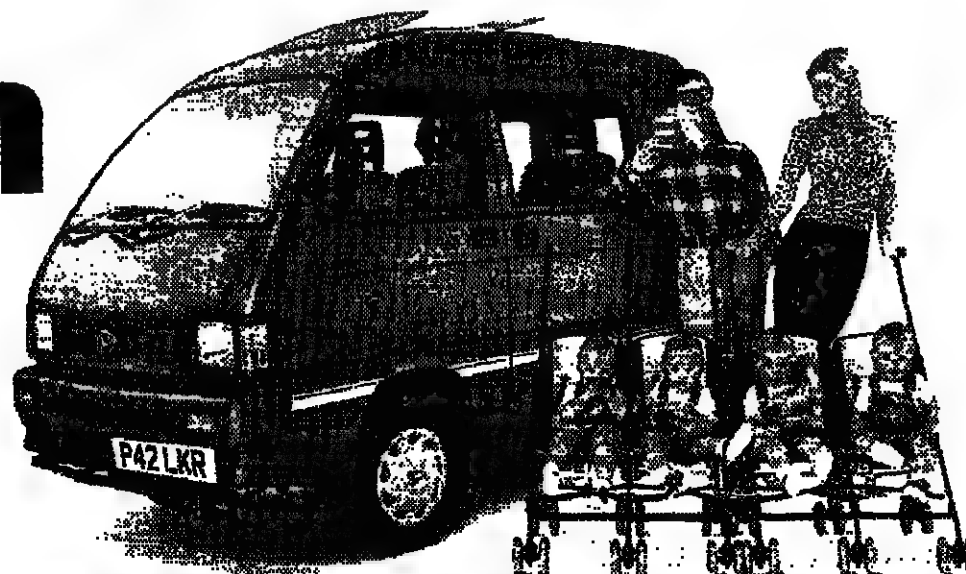
All of these were soon to be swept away by a 40/50 hp six-cylinder model first seen at the 1906 Olympia Motor Show, in which year the association between the electrical engineer and the aristocrat was formalised by the registration of a new company, Rolls-Royce Ltd. It was not an easy birth: investors were wary of new car company launches after a succession of unstable firms had collapsed with heavy losses, and the issue — vital to the financing of the new factory — was seriously undersubscribed as the date neared. It was only the intervention of an enthusiastic Rolls-Royce owner named Arthur Briggs, who agreed to take up the shortfall, which saved the flotation from failure.

Early in 1907, work started on the new factory on a greenfield site on the outskirts of Derby, and in

Continued on page 2

After passion wagon.

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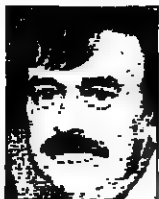
Road deaths are down thanks to videocameras, so now it's time to install more of them — financed by the revenue raised from speeding fines

Take a snap in complete safety

The four London boroughs that installed speed cameras three years ago could scarcely have dreamed that they would reduce road deaths by 70 per cent. The announcement by Hillingdon, Hounslow, Richmond and Ealing this week that average annual road deaths are down from 21 to six means that cameras are here to stay.

That was never in much doubt, because the evidence from elsewhere in Britain has been that cameras are a major deterrent. Anyone who has occasionally been foolish enough to risk a speeding fine in areas where there are cameras has noticed that other drivers are travelling markedly slower. In the days before cameras, speeding motorists were one of a pack; now they stand out like the proverbial sore thumb.

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

Extrapolate the figures from London and the national potential is quite remarkable. At present about 3,600 people are killed each year in road accidents; about one-third of those can be attributed to speed. So if the London percentage full of 70 per cent applied national-

ly, 840 lives would be saved each year.

The question that now arises is that if cameras are so successful, why are so few of our roads covered by them? This issue came up on the *Today* programme on Wednesday. Gavin Strang, the Transport Minister, was asked why cash-starved police authorities could not share the revenue from speeding fines to fund more cameras.

He gave an answer that was too complex for most of us at that hour of the morning: it had something to do with the fact that speeding offences would have to be decriminalised for the revenue to go in that direction. Even a senior police officer on the same programme seemed not to know what Strang was talking about.

In fact, the Minister was quite



right. Britain has a bizarre and archaic legal system and not the least of its curiosities is that money raised from criminal fines goes straight to the Treasury, where it disappears into a black hole and re-emerges in the guise of a subsidy to farmers or a luncheon voucher for a civil servant.

Speeding is a crime, therefore if

the money raised from speeding tickets is to be spent directly on cameras, which are funded locally, speeding would have to be decriminalised. The fine would then become a charge, and a charge can be raised by local authorities (or indeed police authorities) and spent on specific measures. Parking fines in London boroughs, for

example, are not really fines but charges and are payable to the local authority.

Strang said on *Today* that speeding kills people, therefore he was reluctant to decriminalise it. I agree with that, but surely that is looking through the wrong end of the telescope. What we need is not the decriminalisation of speeding

but a change to the rule that says criminal fines must go to the Treasury. They should go where they can best be used.

The other thing shown by the London accident figures is that the possibility of a speed camera being a dummy, meaning that there is no camera in the pod, does not seem to encourage people to take a chance. This is just as well, but it would obviously be better if all had functioning videocameras, not only used against motorists but also to catch muggers and other anti-social elements.

We need not get too carried away with the idea of cameras as a cure-all, otherwise moralisers will have them installed in hotel rooms and overlooking park benches. But as a means of saving lives, they are clearly here to stay. Loaded or not.

I SEE that Tony Blair's Cabinet has agreed to spend at least part of their summer holiday in Britain as part of an effort to boost the home tourist trade. Jolly good. I would strongly suggest that all the transport department politicians head for the South West by car, thus enabling them to travel via the roadworks on the M5 bridge at Avonmouth. Yes, the same roadworks that were in place last year.

Hot August is forecast for dealers

The new car sales bonanza next month could be the busiest ever as motorists rush to take part in what is likely to be the last of its kind. With the August new-registration letter system about to be revamped, "R" registration sales could go close to the record 500,000 mark, and spending is forecast to be the highest yet.

A survey by windscreen specialists Autoglass reports that British motorists have 30 per cent more money to spend on their cars this August, and that whereas last year motorists spent £7,060 — on top of selling or part-exchanging their old vehicle — to change cars, this summer that will be closer to £9,000.

Alan Pulham, director of the National Franchised Dealers Association, says: "We anticipate 490,000 customers driving out of the nation's showrooms in brand-new cars this August. Whether it is one of the new breed of superminis, or the multi-purpose vehicle, motorists have never had so many options to choose from. There is a car to suit every pocket."

The choice is bewildering, but it does seem that convertibles are making a comeback, and the Renault Megané is one of the most attractive. The Megané's design allows it to convert from a four-seater Cabriolet to a two-seater Roadster. Priced at £16,235 for the 116 mph 1.6-litre, and £19,040 for the 134 mph, 2-litre 16-valve, it offers class-leading performance and value.

Ford revolutionised its image, first with the launch of the Ka, and now of the Puma. Acclaimed as probably the best small car in the world, the striking Ka (£8,015) and the more luxurious Ka2 (£8,860), with power

Ready for the rush on R reg? Vaughan Freeman reports



Spoilt for choice: among the new models are, from left, the Vauxhall Corsa GLS; the Subaru Impreza 2.0; and the Rover 1.8 VCC Coupé



Mitsubishi's new 3000 GT (left) offers power and luxury at a hefty £44,600

steering, central locking and electric windows, have turned small-car run-arounds into trendy fashion statements overnight.

The arrival of the Puma has done much the same by shaking up the Fiesta-sized car segment. The lovely-looking 120 mph 1.7-litre 16-valve Puma, which sells at £14,500, is already in the running for the title of best coupe on the road this year.

The Puma is good, but it pales in comparison with the Lotus Elise. A true sports car, its ultralight aluminium chassis enables the relatively modest 1.8-litre engine to wring maximum fun and supercar acceleration from the £21,000 package.

Lovers of high performance cars who prefer four-wheel drive can choose the Subaru Impreza Catalunya, launched to mark the car firm's 1996 World Rally Champion-

ship title. Only 200 of the turbo-charged two-litre Catalunyas will be sold — each individually numbered and priced at £21,610 — for which customers will get all-wheel drive, air conditioning, gold-coloured alloy wheels, and 145 mph performance.

More than twice as costly is the Mitsubishi 3000 GT, which offers its £44,600 price seems to offer twice the goodies, including four-wheel drive, four-wheel steering, and electronically controlled suspension, as well as three-year warranty and a top speed in excess of 150 mph.

Motorists looking for a practical car in a more stylish and innovative alternative package than the usual Mondeo/Vectra family saloon, could do worse than consider the Renault Megané Scenic. A two-litre car with

seating for five, the Scenic provides a spacious cabin as well as underfloor lockers and removable seats, and sells from £13,000 to £16,600.

Rover is hoping to boost sales with a range of niche products, in Cabriolet, Coupé and Tourer form, and lower prices, starting with its 1.8-litre VVC (Variable Valve Control) Coupé, priced at £17,995, which borrows the engine from Rover's MGF two-seater sports car.

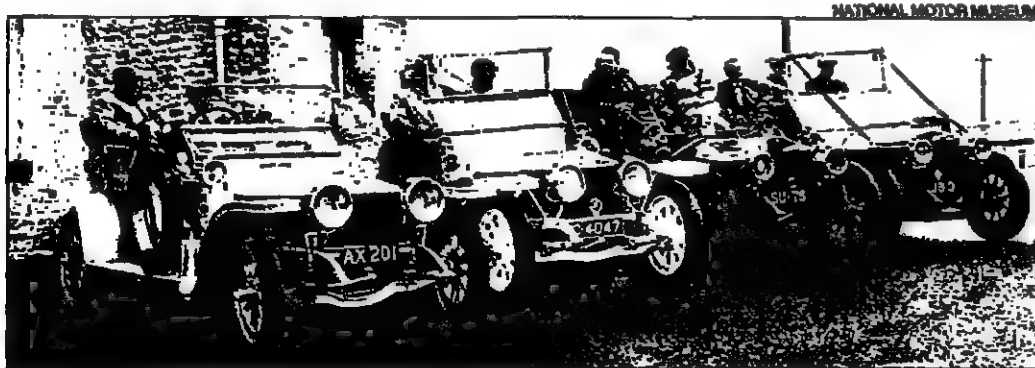
Rover has taken £1,000 off the price of its 1.6-litre Coupé, now priced at £15,995, and has launched a new 1.6-litre SE Coupé with five-spoke alloy wheels, coloured rear spoiler and integral front fog lamps at £16,995.

There is also £1,000 off the 1.6-litre Tourer, now priced at £14,995. The 1.6-litre "niche" Cabriolet is priced from £15,995 to £17,495 for the SE version.

At Vauxhall, the £7,500 to £12,500 Corsa range has been updated and has benefited from having Lotus engineers work on its chassis. As well as claiming the most frugal engine in its class, a 1.6-litre unit capable of almost 49 mpg mixed driving and a top speed of 93 mph, a limited edition Corsa, the £8,395 Sting, features £1,400 worth of "free" equipment, including pearlescent paint.

Britain's fourth best-selling car last year, the £12,700 to £22,000 Vauxhall Vectra, now gets anti-lock braking as standard, with air conditioning available across the whole range.

One of the latest people movers to arrive is the eight-seater Vauxhall Sintra, priced from £19,000 to £25,350. The Sintra comes in 2.2-litre 16-valve form offering 29 mpg in mixed driving, and the less economical 24.6 mpg three-litre V6.



A century of style: the original Ghost — AX 201 — at a later rally to commemorate the 15,000-mile trial and the Park Ward, the ultimate in bespoke Rolls-Royce luxury



Continued from page 1 April that year the press at last were given the opportunity to ride in the new car which had been unveiled at the Motor Show. The fastidious Royce had refused to make it available to the public until it met his own uncompromising standards.

Johnson drove the Autocar's correspondent from London to Bexhill and back on the twelfth of the new 40/50hp cars to be completed, and the

journalist was enchanted: "At whatever speed this car is being driven on its direct third, there is no engine so far as sensation goes, nor are one's auditory nerves troubled, driving or standing, by a fuller sound than that emanates from an eight-day clock."

"There is no realisation of driving propulsion; the feeling as the passenger sits either at front or back of the vehicle is one of being wafted through the landscape."

Still unfinished, that car had left the Manchester factory only a few days earlier, but its uncanny silence had already earned it the name of the Silver Ghost, and after that road test it was sent away for its body to be painted with aluminium paint and its metal parts to be silver-plated.

Early in May Silver Ghost was submitted to a 2,000-mile observed long-distance reliability trial under the supervision of what had recently

become the Royal Automobile Club, running most of the way against a white steam car — "a car quite as ghostly in its movements" — and, after some early problems with a faultily adjusted carburettor had been cured, was driven from the south coast to Scotland using only the direct-drive third and overdrive fourth speeds.

But the test that really showed the supremacy of the Silver Ghost took place be-

tween June 21 and August 8, when it covered 15,000 miles, the longest trial distance permitted by the RAC, with only one trifling stop, when the petrol tap shook into the closed position after 629 miles and cut off the supply to the carburettor, causing 60 seconds' delay. To cover 14,371

miles without a breakdown was not only a record but a near miracle in those days, when even the most experienced motorists were frequently benighted by mechanical failures, and when the club dismantled the car after the run, it "was found to be in all respects in perfect running order and in exceptionally good condition... had the car been in the hands of a private owner, no replacements would have been considered necessary". As it was, a few small wearing parts were replaced to bring the car to "as new" condition at the trifling cost of £22s.7d (£21.6p).

The weekly *Motor* called the trial "the best object lesson on the durability of the modern motor that could possibly be given", while the *Automotor Journal* praised "one of the most conclusive — if not the most conclusive — trials of downright merit in touring car construction which the world has ever seen".

And when the *Country Gentleman* commented that the trial reflected "credit not only upon the firm, but upon British engineering as a whole", it was speaking no less than the truth. The Silver Ghost was the car which made the name Rolls-Royce a by-

word for excellence and that Rolls-Royce my father ordered in 1908 — one of the limited edition "70hp" models, named Dragonfly — so delighted him that to the end of his days his main car was a Rolls-Royce. But how I wish he had kept Dragonfly, because today no 70hp models have survived.

'The feeling at front or back is of wafting through the landscape'

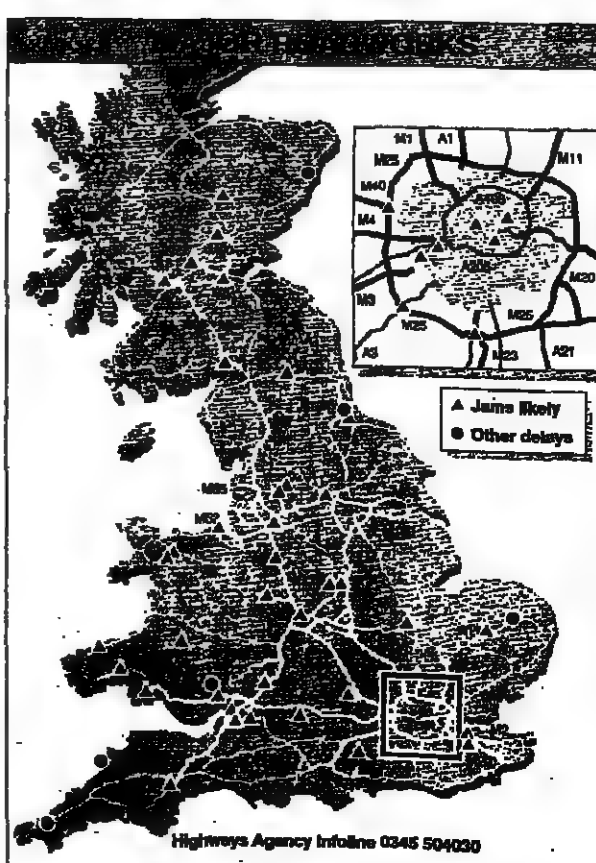
AUTOFAX by Les Evans and David Long

THE FIRST CAR TO SWIM THE CHANNEL, A 1962 AMPHIBAR, USED A TRIUMPH HERALD ENGINE...

PREDATING THE PEOPLE-CARRIER BY HALF A CENTURY, JAMES LIVING BUILT A BENTLEY WITH SLIDING DOORS AS EARLY AS 1935

IN 1906 THE WIGGLE-BUG, A RACING VERSION OF THE POPULAR STANLEY STEAMER, RAISED THE LAND SPEED RECORD TO 127.66 mph...

F1 SUPREMO BERNIE ECCLESTONE HOLDS THE RECORD FOR BRITAIN'S HIGHEST SALARY — £29.7 million in 1993



A class of its own from Mercedes

A German revolution has been planned by a Brit. Vaughan Freeman explains

Mercedes-Benz has taken the best part of four decades to follow the lead of the revolutionary Mini and produce its first true front-wheel drive car.

But the German manufacturer, better known for its huge rear-wheel drive limousines and executive expressos, is hoping that its new A-class will, like the Mini before it, prove a crucial turning point in the way cars are designed and leave the competition clamouring to catch up.

When Alec Issigonis unveiled his tiny car, there was nothing to touch it for cute styling, the extraordinarily space efficient packaging, and the way seating for four and a modest amount of luggage could pack into its 10ft length.

Mercedes has moved the goalposts in a similar manner — with the aid of a British designer — and, just as the Mini did in 1959, redefined car design by defying the accepted pigeon-holing into estate, saloon, hatchback or Espace-style people mover.

Steve Martin, 32, joined Mercedes straight after graduating from Coventry Polytechnic 10 years ago, and is responsible for the A-class exterior styling.

Driving the A-class, the feel is of being at the wheel of something much bigger. Inside, it is all Mercedes, from the three-pointed star on the steering wheel to the robust feeling of security and quality build. Only when you step out, and down, from it are you reminded that, far from being in a Mercedes saloon four feet longer, you are in the half-pint sized A-class.

"When the Mini came out, people did not realise just how revolutionary a car it was," Martin says. "Only after a few years had gone by did that realisation come about. The A-class is just as revolutionary as the Mini was in its time, because it offers so much more than other cars, and all in one package."

"The initial problem we had at Mercedes, used to building saloons, coupes and limousines, was to come to grips with the proportions of the A-class, using a one-box design for maximum interior space."

Mercedes got round that problem by creating in effect a two-storey car, with all the innards such as the petrol tank, axles, battery and exhaust in the "basement", safely stashed under the floor of the body. The occupants sit above the car's busy bits, half a foot or so higher than in a normal road car, which makes them safer in a crash. At the same time, a revolutionary S-shaped engine and gearbox was created which sits at an angle beneath the front passengers, again to save space.

The engine design also increases safety because in an accident the engine is pushed down and back, instead of through the front bulkhead and back into the passenger compartment to break legs. The design works so well that inside there is only 4mm less length than in the Mercedes C-class, which is 941mm longer on the outside than the A-class.

Helmut Petri, project development manager, says: "The car posed many conflicting problems for us. It had to be short and light, at the same time it had to share the



Helmut Petri, project development manager, and the Mercedes A-class: "It's our interpretation of innovation and tradition. It will give a new, dynamic and young look to the image of the marque"



Marketed as a modern lifestyle vehicle, the A-class advertising campaign uses sun, sea ...

A-CLASS 160

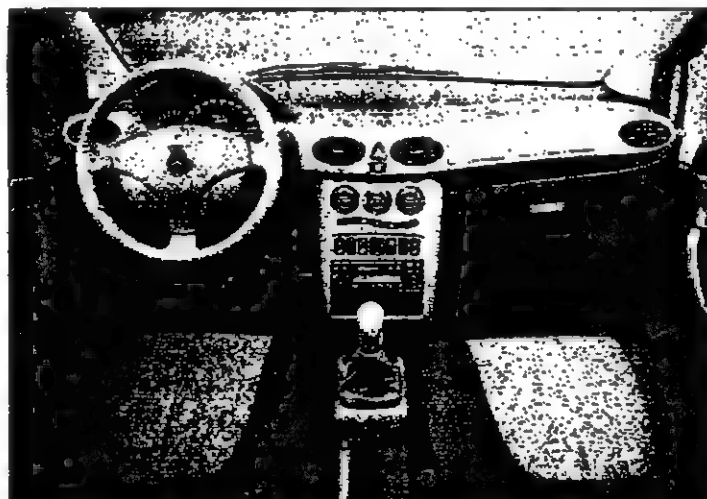
Engine: 1.6-litre four-cylinder producing 102bhp at 5,250rpm, and driving front wheels through five-speed manual gearbox.

Performance: Top speed 113mph, 0-60mph in around 10 seconds.

Economy: Combined cycle 41mpg.

Equipment: Twin side airbags, anti-lock braking, radio-cassette, central locking. Options include fold-back louvred sunroof and cycle racks.

Price: About £17,000.



The feel is of being at the wheel of something much bigger



... and air to suggest an image that echoes the fun of Alec Issigonis's Mini nearly 40 years ago

Mercedes virtues of comfort and safety, and it had to be inexpensive.

"The result is a car which is our interpretation of innovation and of tradition. It will give a new, dynamic and young look to the image of the Mercedes-Benz marque."

Mercedes sees its A-class as a sort of automotive Daley Thompson, a roadgoing decathlete able to excel in all disciplines. It will need to. It has spent around £1 billion over the past three years on the A-

class and plans to sell 200,000 a year. Of those just under 20,000 will sell after the car goes on sale here this time next year.

Priced at between £14,000 for the entry level A140 1.4-litre Classic, and £17,000 for the A160 1.6-litre Avantgarde, it will be by far the cheapest Mercedes to go on sale in Britain, and the company expects 80 per cent of customers will be "conquest" sales, motorists usually seen in a Ford, VW or Vauxhall. It will come in three trim levels,

and with 1.4-litre (82bhp), or 1.6-litre (102bhp) petrol engines, as well as a 1.7-litre diesel (60bhp) and a 1.7-litre turbodiesel (90bhp).

The five-door A-class seats five, and Mercedes claims more than 70 seating permutations, with all but the driver's seat removable, offering a maximum of up to 1,700 litres of space, enough for a couple of bicycles.

Standard equipment includes dual airbags, anti-lock braking, central locking, electric windows

and power steering, and Mercedes is also considering whether to lengthen its current warranty to three years for the A-class. Servicing too will be cheaper, with trips to the garage coming up only every 25,000 miles, cutting maintenance bills by a claimed 30 per cent.

As well as the five-speed manual, there is a clutchless manual, a sort of automatic with a gearstick, which seems a remarkably pointless application of technology. The instinct, as one road tester found,

was still to try and use the absent clutch when moving the gearstick, which only resulted in an unwanted emergency stop on the motorway as he hit the brake instead of the non-existent clutch.

The manual, in contrast, is easy, the clutch light, and even with the 1.4-litre there is plenty of pep, although the fifth gear is a pure fuel-saving overdrive. For motorway overtaking the driver needs to drop down to fourth for meaningful acceleration. The 1.6-litre is excel-

lent in town and on dual carriageways, quiet and responsive, which means a promised more powerful version due in two years should be as much fun again.

Whether the A-class is considered an estate or people mover, hatch or spacious saloon, the German manufacturer is happy to let others decide. Certainly it is an intriguing Jack of all trades. Time will tell whether, like the Mini, it turns out to be a time-defying masterpiece.

Morag Preston visits a car-dealer with a new slant on making the showroom woman-friendly — add a hairdresser



New Chapters: "In an average week, the hair salon sees 200 people. A lot pop in and look around the showroom"

Parked next to the rollers

The whirl of hair-dryers and scent of shampoo is as likely to greet customers at a car dealership in Birmingham as the rumble of engines and smell of petrol.

Bromsgrove-based Clarks Motor Services has opened an ladies' hairdressers in a bid to entice women in. Female professionals are being tempted by the time-saving concept of getting their fuel injection adjusted and their split ends seen to in one go. Buy a car, and you get a free haircut.

With a hairstyle so out of date that a Lada cuts more of a dash, I headed in search of a new look. Sweeping through huge double doors, I caught a sneaky last look at my thatch on the side of a shiny new Corolla. Snaking past tubs of plastic plants and a three-tier fountain, I was led upstairs to the new Chapters salon.

"Hello, my name is Emma, I am your stylist for the day," said my copper-coiffured assistant. Flicking through inspirational pictures, we decided on a hairstyle à la actress Gina Gershon. Massaging Awapuhi shampoo into my hair, Emma Broad-

hurst told me I had just missed an example of the perfect customer: a no-nonsense businesswoman who had dropped off her car to be serviced, and had her hair cut at the same time. It is women like her Clarks is trying so hard to attract.

According to Martin Stannard, dealer principal: "When we were planning the new site, we decided to lease the mezzanine floor. Rather than go for solicitors or accountants, we thought a hair salon would introduce a complementary clientele to the dealership."

All too aware that car salesmen have long held a reputation for "high-pressure sharp-practice", Mr Stannard wants women to feel more comfortable walking into the showroom. "The biggest problem a dealership has is getting people through the door. A lot of ladies are buying cars, or have the deciding factor, and

it is about exposing our products to that audience. In an average week, the hair salon sees 200 people. A lot of ladies pop in and look around the showroom. They sit upstairs and can look down at us without feeling intimidated."

A wine bar and bistro to be opened next door is the next stage in Mr Stannard's plan to entice new customers into the showroom. Clarks also owns a 17-seater minibus, a fleet of child-sized motorised cars, and a bouncy castle, which it lends to local schools.

"It's another form of advertising, but it benefits the community at the same time," he says.

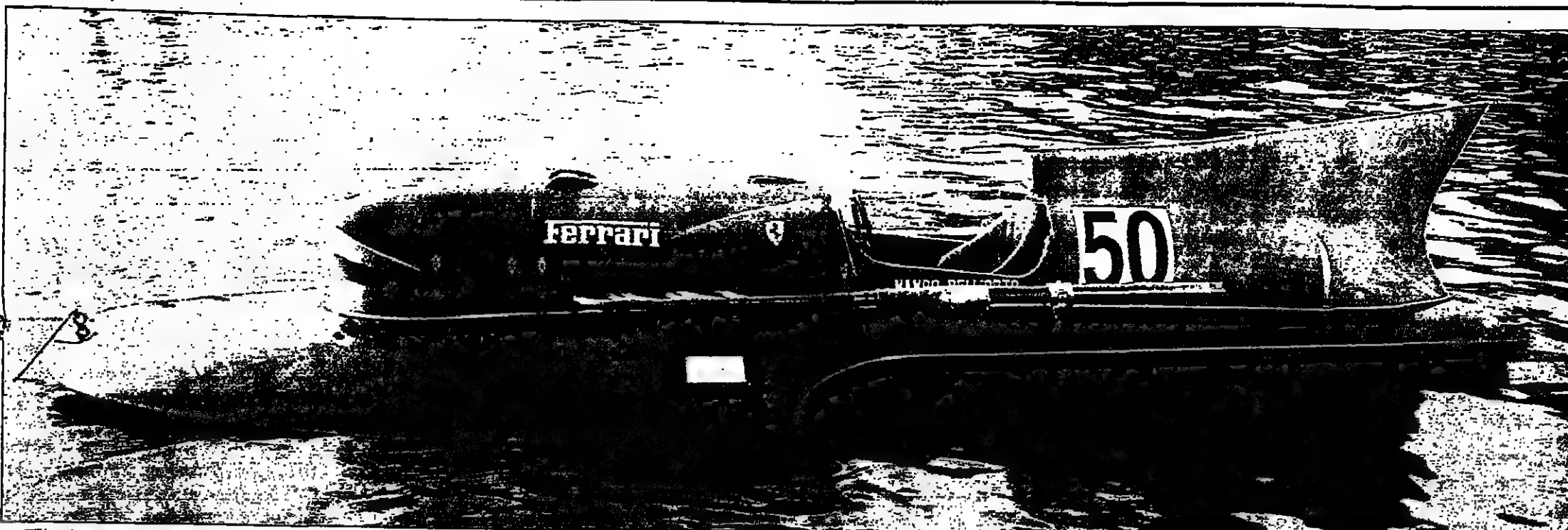
Sieve Evans, a partner at Chapters who is renting the site on a six-year lease, is enjoying the benefits of the cross-marketing ploy. The next development in their relationship is combining databases and sharing staff training. "Clarks approached

us because we had outgrown our other salon up the road. In the States, hairdressers are found in more unusual places, so we thought it was a good idea."

"I was worried that not having a shop frontage might be a disadvantage, but the bistro will soon be here and the Bromsgrove Rovers football ground next door is being turned into a supermarket. When we first told people that we were moving to a car dealership, they said 'You're kidding'. They had the idea that it was all dirt cars and greasy cars, but it's not like that. A couple of people have bought cars on the back of it. One lady wanted to write a cheque right there and then."

As for my hair? Emma daubed it in sculpting foam and doused me in soft spray, but I did not look anything like Gina Gershon. Having been persuaded to test drive rollers in my hair for the first time, I will put it down to experience. My new bouffant was bigger than an over-inflated car tyre, and a side-parting is definitely not for me. I would rather have a Landcruiser any day.

They can sit down at the showroom without feeling intimidated



The 1953 Ferrari/Timossi Hydroplane, which wealthy Italian Achille Castoldi persuaded Enzo Ferrari to work on as a challenger for world water speed records. It topped 150mph on Lake Iseo

The Ferrari that made waves

A million-dollar hydroplane and a car stained with murder are part of a £7m auction. Tony Dawe reports

If a car, is it a boat... is it really a Ferrari? The answer to all these questions about the unique, sleek red machine which goes on sale at Silverstone next Saturday is "Yes".

The Ferrari/Timossi Hydroplane was built in 1953 by the famous Italian manufacturer with a supercharged motor racing engine to challenge for world water speed records. It topped 150mph on Lake Iseo in northern Italy, a record for its class, and later reached an unofficial 178mph.

In recent years, the million-dollar machine has graced the Ferrari museum and major motoring events throughout Europe, but on July 26 it will go under the hammer as the star attraction at an auction staged by Coys of Kensington, West London, as part of its international historic festival at Britain's Grand Prix circuit.

It will be joined by more orthodox Ferraris in a sale which is expected to raise £7 million, the largest auction of its type in Britain — and probably Europe — for at least five years.

The sale will also offer cars with an intriguing, romantic and even tragic history, including the HRG Emperor which played a part in the murder of motor racing enthusiast David Blakely and the execution of his killer, Ruth Ellis. In complete contrast, the sale will also offer a 1936 baby Fiat called the Topolino, meaning "little mouse".

The Ferrari Hydroplane was born out of the desire of Achille Castoldi, a wealthy Italian. Through his friendship with racing drivers Luigi Villorosi and Alberto Ascari, Castoldi obtained access to Enzo Ferrari and persuaded him to spend more time and money than he would have wished on converting and supercharging a 4.5-litre V12 engine to fit into a trifoil design called ARNO XI.

The decision by its private

owner to sell this famous machine at auction and the entry in the sale of a rare 1955 Ferrari 857/S, one of the most successful competition cars of all time and another million-dollar vehicle, has encouraged other owners to put fabulous cars into the auction," says Tim Schofield of Coys.

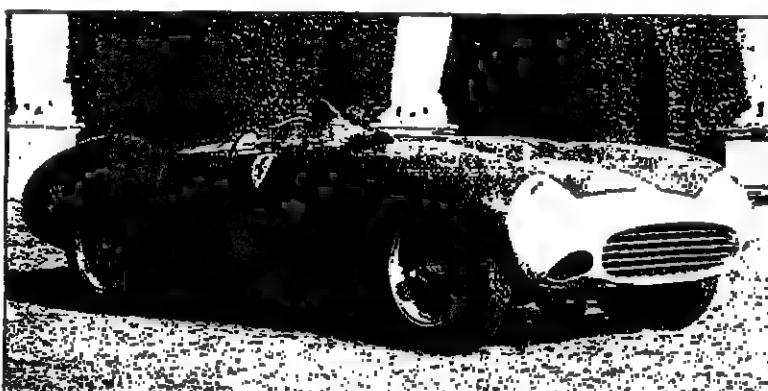
"With Ferrari celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, some collectors have decided this is an ideal time to sell and we will be offering 30 of the marque from a 1953 212 series Cabriolet to a 1990 F40."

The sale has been further boosted by 17 cars from Hans Dürst, the Swiss ice hockey champion who became a wealthy motor dealer. They include a 1972 Lamborghini Miura, one of a handful of cars which can claim to have influenced future design, and a 1957 BMW 507 two-seater roadster, one of the models that helped establish the company as a top manufacturer.

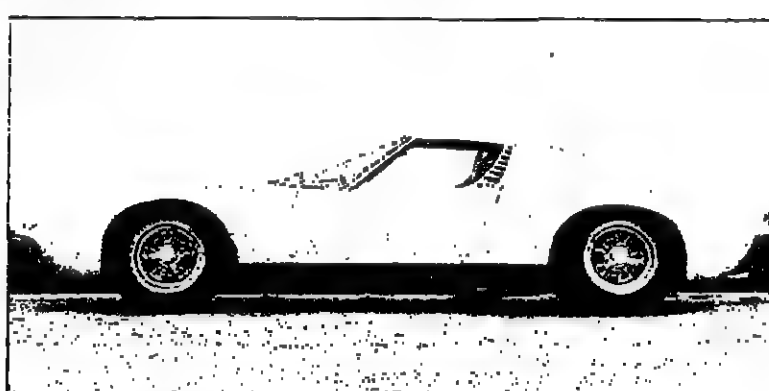
Much attention at the viewings next Thursday, Friday and Saturday will, inevitably, focus on Blakely's dream car which was used in *Dance with a Stranger*, the film about his relationship with Ellis.

The Emperor was built for Blakely by an Aston Martin engineer around a new engine developed by HRG from a twin-cam version of a Singer 1500cc engine. The racing enthusiast had spent much of his inheritance on the car, to the annoyance of Ellis, and this extravagance was one source of increasing tension between the engaged couple.

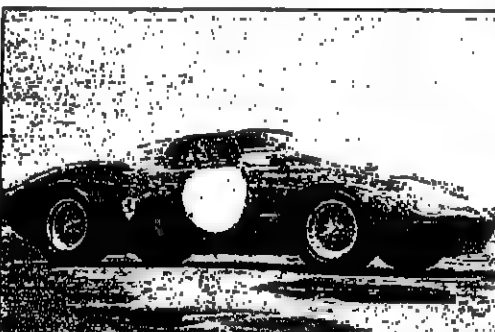
On his debut in the car at the 1954 Boxing Day meeting at Brands Hatch, Blakely finished just behind a Connaught-powered Lotus and in front of the Cooper-Bristol and was looking forward to future victories. Before he could race again, however, Blakely was shot by Ellis.



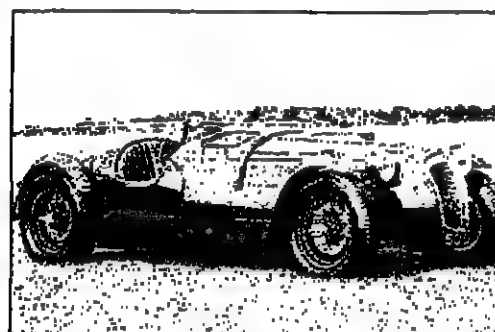
The million-dollar 1955 Ferrari 857/S, which won five times in nine starts



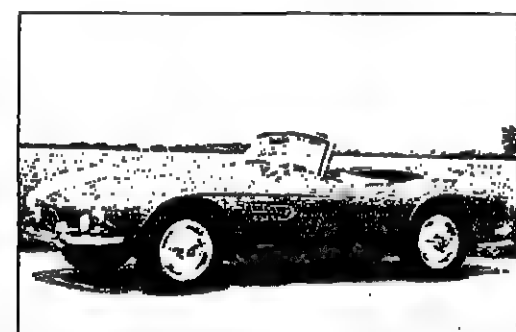
The 1972 Lamborghini Miura from the Hans Dürst collection



A 1964 Ferrari 250 Le Mans, one of only 32 built



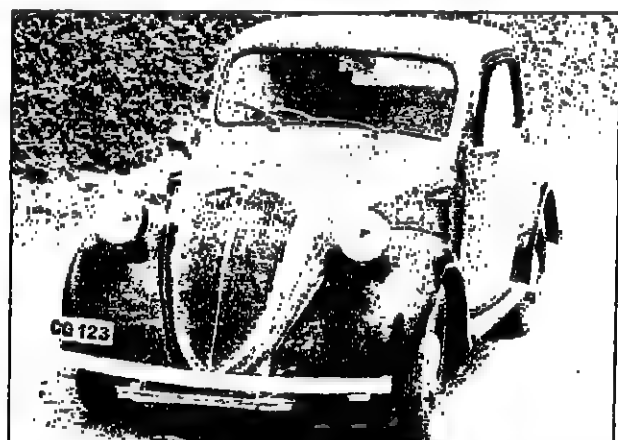
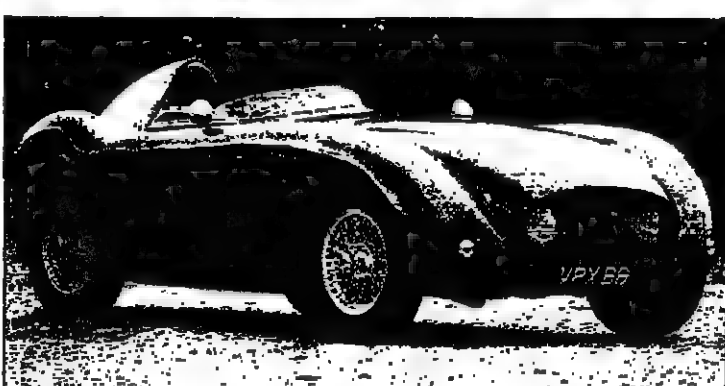
A Frazer Nash Continental V8 Le Mans Replica



A 1957 BMW 507, also from the Dürst collection



Rupert Everett and Miranda Richardson as David Blakely and Ruth Ellis in *Dance with a Stranger*, the film that also featured the HRG Emperor (right) which caused increasing tension between the ill-fated couple



The extremely rare first-year production 1936 Fiat Topolino

His Majesty went that way

King Alfonso XIII's means of escape from angry husbands tops the bill in a veteran and classic collection sale

King Alfonso XIII of Spain is rumoured to have used the remarkable performance of the Hispano-Suiza 15T to out-distance many an irate and jealous husband. On Friday a perfect restoration of the 1912 model will be pursued with equal eagerness by car enthusiasts when it tops the bill at a veteran and classic car sale, Tony Dawe writes.

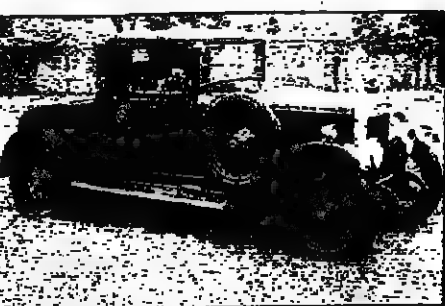
The car, designed by the Swiss engineer Marc Birkigt, cost £50,000 to restore and is expected to fetch twice that amount at the Brooks auction at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu.

It is described as "a short-chassis 3.6-litre, three-to-four seater sports torpedo" and carries the name Alfonso XIII because of the Spanish monarch's support for the model.

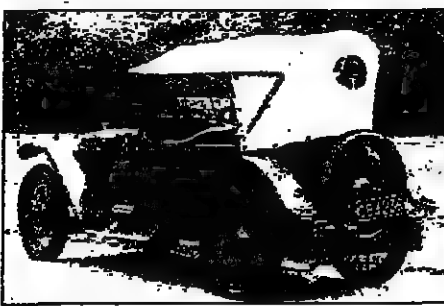
The 15T's remarkable achievements included lapping Brooklands at 81.5mph in 1914 and claiming first place in the tourist class at the Gallion hill climb, a 1-in-10 gradient, at an average speed of 54mph.

Brooks claims that the restored Hispano-Suiza lives up to the claim in the company's original catalogue that "the facility of manipulation, the quick response and great force of the motor render our various models extremely easy to drive at all speeds and make them cars par excellence for touring and for sport."

Almost as striking when the



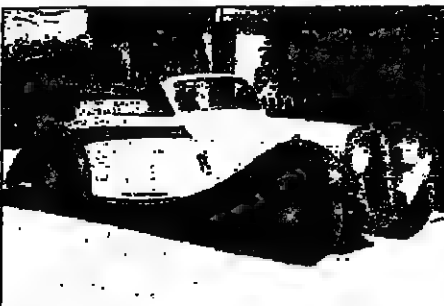
The 1927 "Doctor's Coupe" Daimler



Alfonso XIII's 1912 Hispano-Suiza 15T



The historic 2.6-litre Aston Martin DB2



The V12 Atalanta, one of only two survivors

auction opens for viewing next Thursday will be a royal blue 1927 Daimler. With its long bonnet, protruding rounded boot and spare wheel mounted on the running board, the car would look perfectly at home in *Bonnie and Clyde* but its coachwork was given the very respectable name of "Doctor's Coupe" in the 1920s.

It is comprehensively equipped with nickel electric lighting, windscreen-mounted swivel spotlight, wooden lathed petrol tank, opening windscreen and carriage-style loop door handles. Its basic price in 1927 was £490; on Friday it is expected to fetch between £9,000 and £12,000.

Hopours for style may be

taken by a slightly more modern but even rarer model: one of only two V12 Atalantas believed to have survived. The marque was the brainchild of A.C. Bertelli of Aston Martin and Alfred Gough, designer of the overhead camshaft Frazer Nash engine.

Founded in 1937, Atalanta Motors of Staines specialised

in hand-built sports cars of advanced design, but production failed to recommence after the Second World War.

The 1939 drophead coupe featured in the sale was restored between 1988 and 1994 and finished in pale blue over dark blue with dark blue leather interior and is expected to fetch around £35,000.

Among the sports cars on offer is an historic ex-works 2.6-litre Aston Martin DB2, driven in the 1950s by Reg Parnell. In his hands, the touring coupe made successful appearances in the 1952 Mille Miglia, the Prix de Berne and the Shelsley Walsh hill climb. Angela Brown, daughter of David, who owned Aston Martin, won a Silverstone race in the car before it was sent to Australia.

An earlier and equally desirable racer in the sale is a 1927 Vauxhall 30/98. A previous version had become the first production sports car to lap Brooklands at more than 100mph in March 1923. The model on offer carries the sporting Velox four-seat touring body and went to South Africa in the 1930s, returning to Britain in 1991.

One of the outstanding aspects of the sale is a group of handsome Edwardian cars from the estate of the late Clive Unsworth, including some of the earliest and finest examples of Cadillac, Pierce-Arrow, Renault and Crossley, dating from 1911 to 1920.

READER OFFER THE TIMES

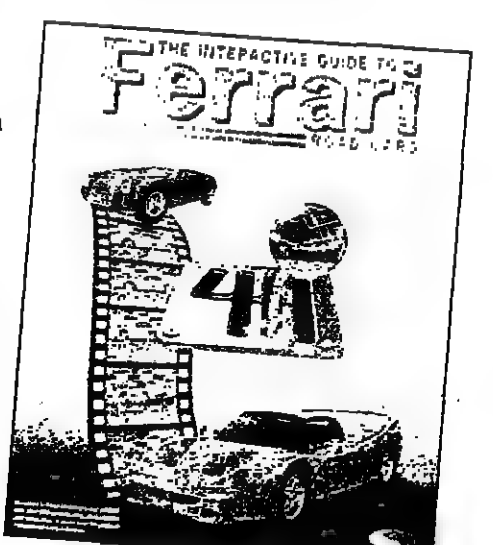
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CHANGING TIMES

USED CAR BRIEF



OVERALL: Check for suspension that has given up suspending and look too for excessive wear on front tires. There is room for five inside, and comfort levels are all right if not pampering. If a Samara has been properly looked after it will continue to provide cheap, basic A to B transport.

If you want a car that will turn from Jekyll to Hyde when you are away from the family and not on a school run, the Civic most certainly is not it. However, if you want high quality work inside the cabin, a lack of weird and wacky design, no tack and a functional, dashboard layout, then the Civic is for you. M and N registered cars are best value. And expect to pay between £8,500 and £9,995 for a 1.4 five-door. Electric Pack with low mileage.

though much improved, gives a lumpy ride on rough roads transmitting too much of the surface to the driver. This deterioration in ride comfort is often the trade-off when sporty versions are created of cars that begin life as saloons or hatchbacks. It's probably not that important to a driver who buys simply for the "sporty feel", but it makes an uneasy compromise in a family car.

It's tough turf to fight over. But as Vauxhall's engineers go on tweaking the Vectra, the gloomy sentimental chorus of the "keep the Cavalier" crowd now seems a distant echo.

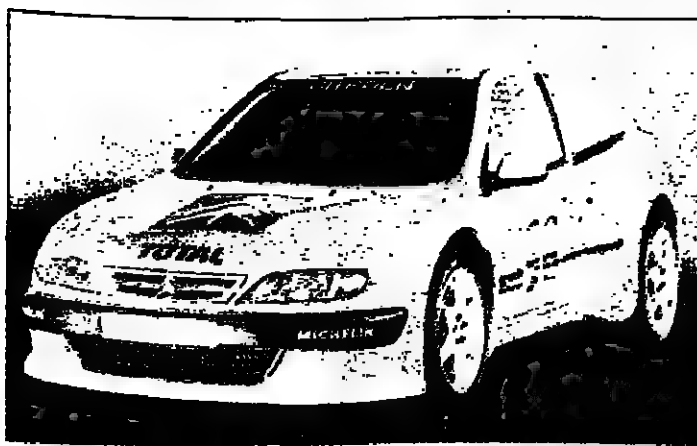
■ **BIG and blistering**, the new Audi S8 goes on sale next month at a price of

\$60,929 (\$61,544 on the road). The range-topper [above] promises to ally super-luxury with super-performance, underlining Audi's re-emergence of recent years. An updated 4.2-litre engine delivers 340 brake horse power through an automatic five-speed gearbox, though all cars get the Tiptronic sequential manual system too. That is good enough for a 0-60mph take-off time of 5.5 seconds and an electronically limited maximum of 155mph. Inside, there is a satellite navigation system, computer and electric windows, including a few electric things you have never even thought of yet.

It's tough turf to fight over. But as Vauxhall's engineers go on tweaking the Vectra, the gloomy sentimental chorus of the "keep the Cavalier" crowd now seems a distant echo.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

Despite the marketing hype and £500m investment, Kevin Eason is less than impressed by the Citroën Xsara



The Xsara sports version being developed from the VTS 16V coupé

Euro-bland however you pronounce it

It's all right for you lot out there: I have to read the worst of this tosh and then do a translation before it gets to your newspaper. Do marketing men believe any of this drivel they pump at poor, hapless little chaps like me? Do they ever analyse publicity blurbs so outrageously daft that even someone even as terminally glib as me can see straight through them?

Take this paragraph, straight from the press release for a new car to our showrooms in November, and try to guess what it means: this car is "both classic and modern, luxurious but fluid". Eh? Anyway, it apparently also has "pure and sober external styling" which "reflects the central theme of elegance. The combination of a plunging nose and a more compact rear give [the car] the looks of a spunky thoroughbred. The muscled short rear suggests latent power."

With those inspiring words chiming in my addled brain, I walked all around this car: I peered inside. I looked in the boot. I even had a look underneath — but it still looked like a Citroën to me. Not even a very interesting Citroën.

Then there was the reasoning

CITROËN XSARA

Engines: Four-cylinder 1.4-litre — 2-litre petrol plus 1.9-litre diesel and turbo-diesel. 1.4 gives 75bhp, 2-litre 167bhp and 1.9TD 90bhp.

Performance: 1.4-litre: 0-62mph in 14.1 secs, 110mph. 2-litre: 8.7 secs, 138mph. 1.9TD: 12.8 secs, 111mph.

Economy: (combined cycle) 1.4-litre: 39.2mpg; 2-litre 30mpg; 1.9TD 42.8mpg.

Features: Child-lock, warming, audio controls on steering wheels.

Prices: From £11,000.

behind the name for the replacement for the ZX: Xsara. Handy hint from Citroën here: it is pronounced Zara — captures the imagination apparently, implying French taste and high standing. Or look at it another way. Xsara is the latest baty name to follow the Xantia and the Paxo, sorry Saxo.

Ignore the hyperbole because this new Citroën frankly looks



Quirky is out, conformity is in: Citroëns used to be pretty, but it has been decreed that they must not step out of the Euro-line if they are to muscle into Ford Escort territory



At least the Xsara's interior detailing is clever and Citroën introduces a height and reach adjustable steering column

shorter. Nothing radical here: it seems for an investment close to £500 million.

To be fair, the Xsara looks pleasantly not bad, quite nice-ish. Er, that's it. The seven engines — five petrol from 1.4 to 2-litre, two 1.9 diesels, one turbo-charged — are carried over from ZX and most of the features, switchgear and trim are all recognisably Citroën.

Detailing is clever with lots of storage space and Citroën introduces a height and reach adjustable steering column for a more relaxed driving position. Hi-fi controls come on to the steering wheel and the interior does live up to Citroën's claim to be the roomiest in its class, with a big boot and bags of legroom. Citroën has concentrated hard on the sort of big-car features normally missing in this class: open the door and it clicks through three positions so you don't throw the door open in a car park and whack the car next door.

Citroën says safety has been improved with doors which have an extra lower connecting point to resist frontal impacts. Side airbags will also be available. And Citroën kicks into touch its keypad security system, which needed the driver to

punch in a code before turning the ignition. The Xsara gets a security system activated by a simple, two-button remote transponder key.

Alongside the hatchbacks comes a coupé, which will also be available as a roaring 2-litre, 167 brake horse power sportster, badged VTS, with a 0-62mph time of 8.7 seconds and top speed of 124mph. The rest of the range is slightly more staid: the 75bhp 1.4 swaps speed (0-62 in 14.1 seconds, top 109mph) for frugality, offering an average 39mpg, while the non-turbo diesel's 44mpg is positively miserly.

So Xsara joins the UK market high on equipment and detail, with proven engines and potentially good reliability levels, even if it does not look much different to the competition. No prices announced yet, but Xsara will be competitive, probably starting around £11,000, to punch a hole in a segment of the market for smallish cars which claim around a third of all sales.

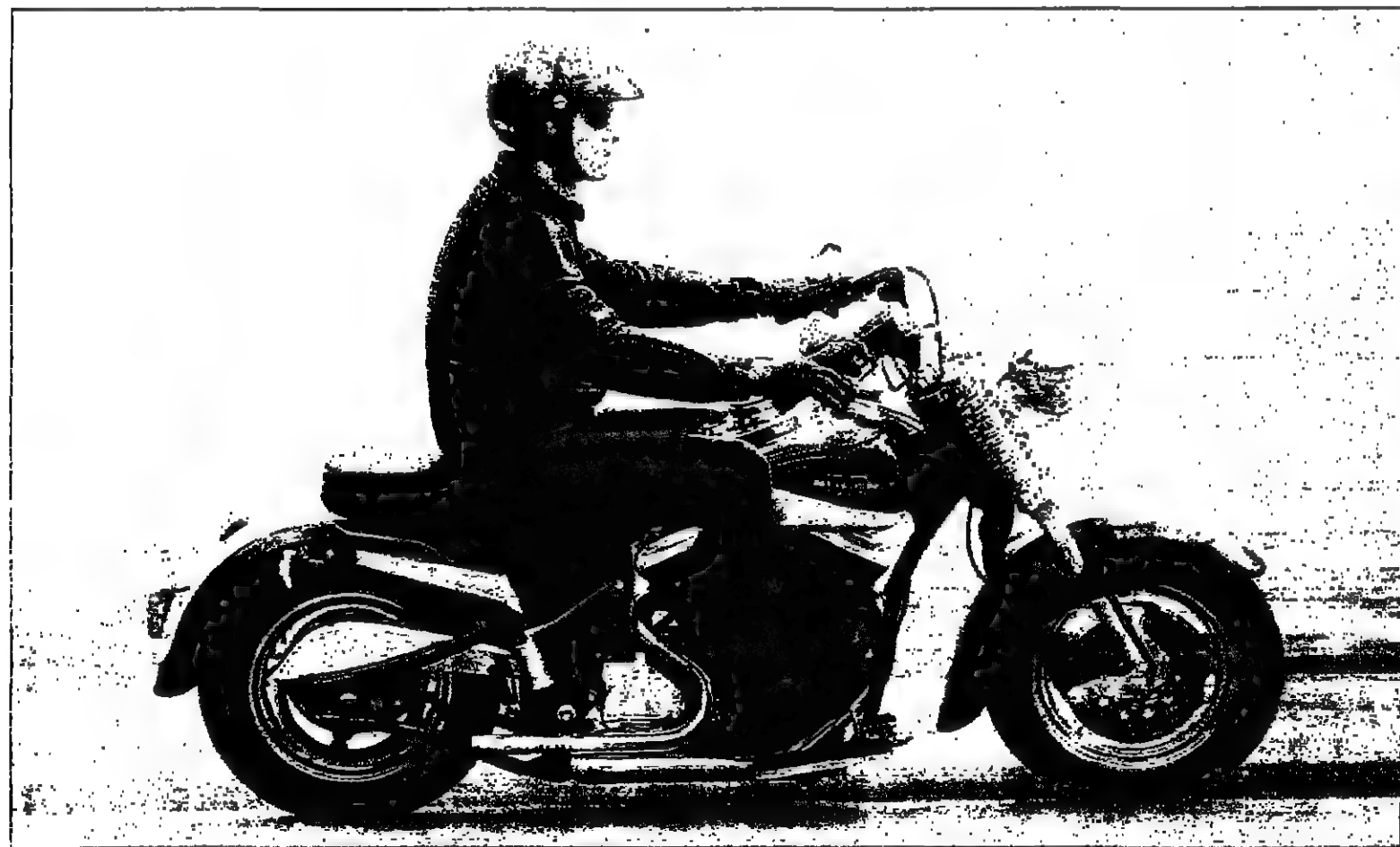
Meanwhile, as you save up pound coins until November, feast your eyes on the classic and modern, luxurious but fluid style of the new Xsara (pronounced Zara) and if you find out what it all means, let me know.

much like the others. I sometimes wonder what the designers get up to for the four years it takes to put together an all-new car like the Xsara. I can only assume that Art Blakeslee, Citroën's genial American design chief, starts off with something radical which committee upon committee gradually whittles down to the same Euro-bland we see from every manufacturer.

Citroëns used to be quirky, they used to be pretty — all swooping noses and bodywork like a missile. They stood out from the crowd. But they didn't hang together too well, always a disincentive when you are looking for big sales — and Citroën wants to shift 300,000 Xsaras a year, with around two-thirds for export. So the PSA Peugeot-Citroën conglomerate of soon-to-retire boss

Jacques Calvet decreed that Citroën must not step out of the Euro-line if it was to muscle into Ford Escort territory: quirky is out, conformity is in.

The PR boys might be sending a different message in the press release, but truth is that when you see the Xsara (pronounced Zara) you will decide it looks like a Xantia (pronounced Zantia) squashed



Long, low, heavy and softly-sprung, the Excelsior had plenty of low-rev torque, and responded to a crack of the throttle with thrilling acceleration

Roaring out of the Twenties

Excelsior-Henderson? Who they? A reborn American rival for Harley-Davidson, reports Roland Brown

Mention the name Excelsior-Henderson to the average motorcyclist today, and the chances are that they won't know what you are talking about. Repeat those words in a few years' time, and you might be offered a ride on the big V-twin cruiser of that name parked in the same rider's garage.

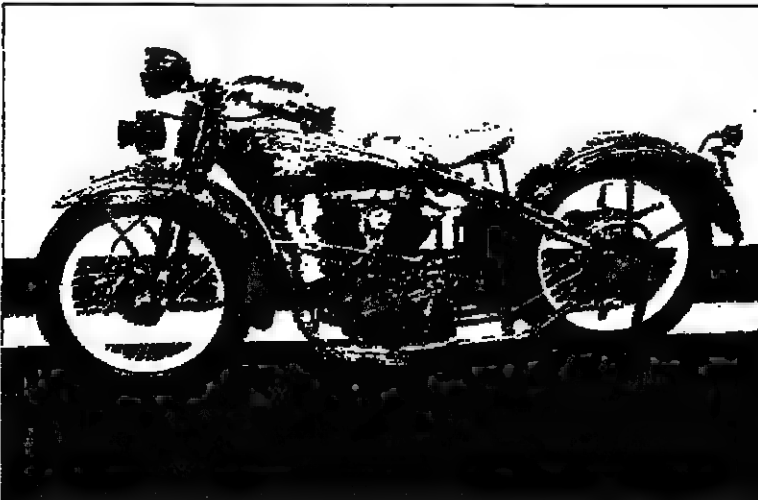
Excelsior-Henderson, one of the "Big Three" American bike manufacturers in the 1920s, is on the way back. Late next year, a 1,386cc heavyweight cruiser called the Super X is due to begin rolling off the production line of a new Excelsior-Henderson factory in Belle Plaine, Minnesota. A legend whose last model was introduced more than 60 years ago will be back on the road.

It was only a matter of time. Such has been the recent success of Harley-Davidson — the Milwaukee firm's sales are soaring; turnover exceeds \$1 billion — that entrepreneurs were bound to try and take a piece of the pie. The most

likely revival was that of Indian, which built V-twins until 1953 and is the most famous of the fallen American marques. But although several individuals claimed ownership of the trademark, and outlined plans for impressive new bikes, none could raise the necessary finance. The Indian trail went cold.

Excelsior-Henderson is less well-known than Indian, but that was not the case in the 1920s, when the firm's Excelsior V-twins and Henderson four's were built at Chicago in the world's largest motorcycle factory. Fast and luxurious, they were ridden by Hollywood stars and celebrities including Charles Lindbergh and Henry Ford. But America's Depression, plus the falling cost of cars, led to the factory's closure in 1931.

The Excelsior-Henderson name remained unused until 1992. Then, brothers David and Dan Hanlon acquired rights to Excelsior-Henderson, quit their jobs and set about raising some money. The brothers, both in their forties, shared a



passion for bikes — and, more importantly, each had a successful background in business.

By the summer of 1993 the Hanlons had raised \$3.5 million of private backing, employed several people in their headquarters at Minneapolis and had begun work on the first Super X prototype. The investment required is \$20-30 million, so we need a serious backer, admitted David Hanlon. "But if we don't find the money immediately, we'll do what every company from

Harley-Davidson to General Motors has done — keep trying."

The Hanlons' timing was right, as was their approach. Last August, Excelsior-Henderson was awarded \$13m of local funding towards a \$30m factory at Belle Plaine, Minnesota, near the farm where the brothers grew up. In September, Excelsior announced that a further \$11.5m had been raised by selling stock in the company.

There is now little doubt that Excelsior-Henderson will soon be

building bikes again, following in the tyre tracks of Triumph, the Leicestershire firm whose rebirth is the only recent motorcycling event of similar importance. Six years after launching its first bikes, Triumph is now an established manufacturer with an annual output of over 15,000 units. Excelsior-Henderson, which aims to build 4,000 bikes in 1998, intends to have 450 employees producing 20,000 machines five years later.

Linking the two firms is British engineer Allan Hurd, a key figure in establishing Triumph's factory at Hinckley and who now faces a similar task at Excelsior-Henderson, having left Leicestershire to set up and run the Minnesota plant. "It was a big step, but life's all about challenges and this project was very exciting," he says.

The firm's first model shares its Super X name with the old Excelsior company's best-known bike. Its format blends traditional American styling and features — high handlebars, footboards, big mudguards and a large-capacity V-twin engine — with modern engineering. The 1386cc motor is cooled by air and oil and features four-valve cylinder heads, twin overhead camshafts and a power output of about 80bhp — considerably more than any standard Harley.

My short ride on a prototype did not allow firm conclusions, but was enough to give the impression that the Super X will have much to offer riders looking for an American-style cruiser. The Excelsior is long, low, heavy and softly-sprung; built for relaxed and comfortable travel at a pace well below its likely 120mph top speed. The fuel-injected motor had plenty of low-rev torque, and responded to a crack of the throttle with thrilling acceleration.

It remains to be seen how the American public will respond to the Super X, which will cost about \$20,000 (£12,500) — competitive with a top-of-the-range Harley — when it goes on sale across America. (Exports are scheduled for one or two years later.) But for Excelsior-Henderson, the signs are good. It looks as though Harley-Davidson will soon have some serious American competition once again.

David Long looks at the great racing heritage of Renault and traces a unique survivor



A marque that has led for 90 years

First, second and third at Silverstone on Saturday, five World Championships, two British world champions, more than 85 race wins and for nine years the power behind the Williams team.

Yet how many enthusiasts, minutely conversant with every Villeneuve or Alesi lap time, realise that Renault's grand prix heritage dates back more than 90 years? On the weekend of June 26 1906 held over two days on a 64-mile circuit just outside Le Mans, the first grand prix race ever run was won by a 13-litre, four-cylinder Renault AK.

Paris-Bordeaux, Paris-Toulouse and Paris-Berlin. But it was in 1902 that the company really made its mark when his brother Marcel took the company's new 3.4-litre Model K to first place in the celebrated Paris-Vienna marathon, beating 136 other competitors and arriving at the finishing line so far ahead of the field that race officials were not even there to receive him.

Louis himself came in only 28th, but it mattered little as his brother's win was more than enough to propel the company to the first rank of manufacturers, establishing the configuration of the Model K as the new ideal for a "light car". Production of a touring version, dubbed the NA and in effect a smaller-engined version of the racer, started almost immediately.

How many found their way to this country is impossible to establish, but we tracked down Britain's only survivor to the Herts/Essex border, the home of its owner and restorer George Dorrington.

Having studied engineering



Past glories: George Dorrington and his Renault NA, one of only three left in the world

at Bristol University, and served with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers during the Second World War, George is now retired from his family's bakery business. His joy is a workshop and barn full of vintage and Edwardian cars, among them the extremely rare Renault NA.

He bought his first Renault, a 1913 "Doctor's Coupe", about 35 years ago and still uses it regularly, most recently driving more than 700 miles to the Loire Valley and back. But it is the NA, which has pride of place, and not just because of its historical connections. It is one of only four NAs still known to exist, three if you discount an incomplete one in Australia.

George acquired his, or rather most of it, in the late 1960s when it was evident that there was a lot missing, including the chassis, front axle and steering gear and Renault's distinctive radiators.

Incredibly, five years later most of the missing components turned up on a farm in Normandy. Better still, once George had shipped them home and cleaned them up, he discovered that the engine and chassis numbers matched up, proving they had come from the same car.

There was still no sign of the missing radiators, however, so George made his own, fabricating more than 3,200 little

cooling fins and cropping nearly 13,000 corners before they could be soldered on. That was in 1977, at which time George helped organise a commemorative run to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Renault's great victory, deciding to rebury his own car for the event as an exact replica of Marcel Renault's right down to the race number 147.

George admits having to drill more than 6,000 holes in the seatbacks was "a bit of a bore", but that is how Marcel liked it, and anyway, after the radiators, building a replica body was comparatively simple. Once completed it joined 20 other venerable Renaults leaving Paris to tackle the approximately 1,000-mile

Present triumphs Villeneuve triumphs at Silverstone. Renault-engined Benetton were placed 2nd and 3rd

George admits that having to drill more than 6,000 holes in the seatbacks was 'a bit of a bore'

route across Europe. For Renault it was a double celebration as the event also marked the 75th anniversary of their activities in Britain.

Two decades on, the four-cylinder 2.6-litre side-valve engine is still going strong. Developing 14 horsepower at a leisurely 1,200rpm with drip-feed lubrication, a leather-lined clutch, an extremely tricky quadrant gearchange and hand-operated brakes acting only on the rear wheels, the NA is clearly not for the faint-hearted. But in the right hands, says George, it is good for 50mph and will do it all day without complaining.

And he should know. George reckons he has already done more than 35,000 miles in the old lady, nipping part in every Brighton run since 1977, letting Nigel Mansell have a go around Brooklands a few years back, and driving to numerous events and rallies in the UK, Ireland, France, Andorra, Corsica and Sardinia.

Already George is planning how to celebrate the Renault company centenary next year.

STEERING COLUMN

Finding the winners by a long stalk

If you want to know about snails and speed, ask Neil Riseborough. Come the weekend, Neil trades a Valmet 8100 tractor for the comforts of a Renault Savamhah, taking to the road as managing director of Snails on Tour.

Simon Hacker writes. Neil is Britain's only official snail trainer. Snails selected from his farm near King's Lynn are carefully observed for their potential to get up and go. The snailiest quality to join the 1997 tour programme. The least sluggish have been limbering up in preparation for the World Snail Racing Championships in Conham, Norfolk today, the high point of Britain's snail racing calendar.

"The shell should be aerodynamic, like a decent sports car," he says. "The shallower the swirl, the quicker it'll go. The length of eye stalks is also important in a photo-finish, the longer-stalked snail will be the winner."

The drama builds up, but the race can be over in mere hours. Rogue private snails have been highly successful: the 0-60 metres per hour record was smashed in 1995 by Archie, who covered 13m in a feverish 120 seconds, powering his way into the Guinness Book of Records.

What's your first driving memory?

Probably on my dad's lap on a tractor, although I remember first holding the

wheel of a Moggie 1000 pick-up.

What was your first car?

A two-tone green and cream Triumph Herald, bought for £15 with no MoT.

What car do you drive now and why?

A 1.7-litre petrol Renault Savamhah, a seven-seater. With the demands of three children and the 1997 tour programme, we needed something a little different. A people carrier was too pricey and this was next best. When you're buying a snail-friendly car you have to think about ventilation, circulation and humidity — climate control is very important because air changes can dramatically impair a snail's performance.

Do you enjoy driving?

The longer I'm married, the harder it gets. Norfolk is a great county for driving though — the volume of traffic is so much less here.

What is your dream car?

A Chrysler Voyager. We drove one on holiday in Canada last year and thought it was brilliant.

Which is your most hated car?

The Ford Ka. Some people expected me to like it because it looks like a snail, but to me it looks more like a cosmic beetle.



Neil Riseborough reflects on one of his contenders

Championship chance

The Superbike World Championship visits Britain for the second time this year when the European round is run at Brands Hatch in Kent on August 3. Thanks to Brands Hatch and Team Suzuki, whose riders include British hope James Whitham, one lucky reader of Car 97 has a chance to win a pair of tickets, visit the pits and talk to the team.

All you have to do is say which team Championship leader Carl Fogarty rides for. Send your answer on a postcard with your name, address and daytime telephone number to: Superbike Competi-

tion, Car 97, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The winning card will be drawn from all correct entries. Closing date July 24. Winner will be notified by telephone. Usual competition rules apply.

The Superbike series is based on roadbikes and last year 57,000 turned out to watch the racing. The crowd this year is expected to be bigger and to provide vocal support to top home riders: Carl Fogarty, Neil Hodgson, his Ducati team-mate and Suzuki's Whitham. And our reader offer for VIP viewing is still open. See below.

French, classy, stylish and very fast

From the banks of the Loire, the hand-built Venturi is back in Britain. Ian Morton is impressed

With £60,000 to spend where does the discerning customer turn? Porsche, Jaguar, Mercedes, Lotus? Pre-owned Bentley, Aston or Ferrari? Heavy end of Audi or BMW? Or Venturi?

Hand-built on the banks of the Loire near Nantes, Venturi made a brief but unsustained gesture at the UK supercar market a few years ago. In informed circles, the marque is known for gritty competition in Europe, including six finishes in eight Le Mans outings. Now owned by a Thai motor group called Nakarin-Benz, run by ex-Lexus MD Mike Bishop and imported by Kensington-based Aston specialist Nicholas Mee, it is backed with serious intent.

And why not? The lure of the new and exotic was ever a feature of the up-market motoring fringe, and the Venturi Atlantique 300 offers the two basic requisites — powerful, starworthy styling and stirring performance. Capable of 174mph, it is the fastest production car made in France today. Better still, it is logical.

Those lines and curves are elegantly drawn yet compactly athletic, the wide frontal grille and driving lights are particularly fetching, the cabin acknowledges no current fad and nothing is going to look dated in a hurry. The composite body clothes a stout steel chassis, and all the visible inner parts look as carefully finished as the skin. The turbo-charged engine, sited amidships, is a development of the brawny and well-seasoned 3-litre Renault V6 and drives a proven transmission.

Driving could into London traffic in an expensive, unknown car can remain a slightly daunting experience even after 30 years of testing, but I cannot recall one more instantly friendly than this. The control area, reminiscent of Lotus but more integrated,

ATLANTIQUE

Engine: V6 2975cc alloy with turbocharger giving 281bhp at 5300rpm.

Transmission: Five-speed manual.

Performance: 0-60 mph in 5.5 seconds, maximum 174 mph.

Economy: Urban TBA, 29.7mpg at 50mph, 21.7mpg at 75mph.

Equipment: Burr-walnut and leather trim.

Price: £59,579.

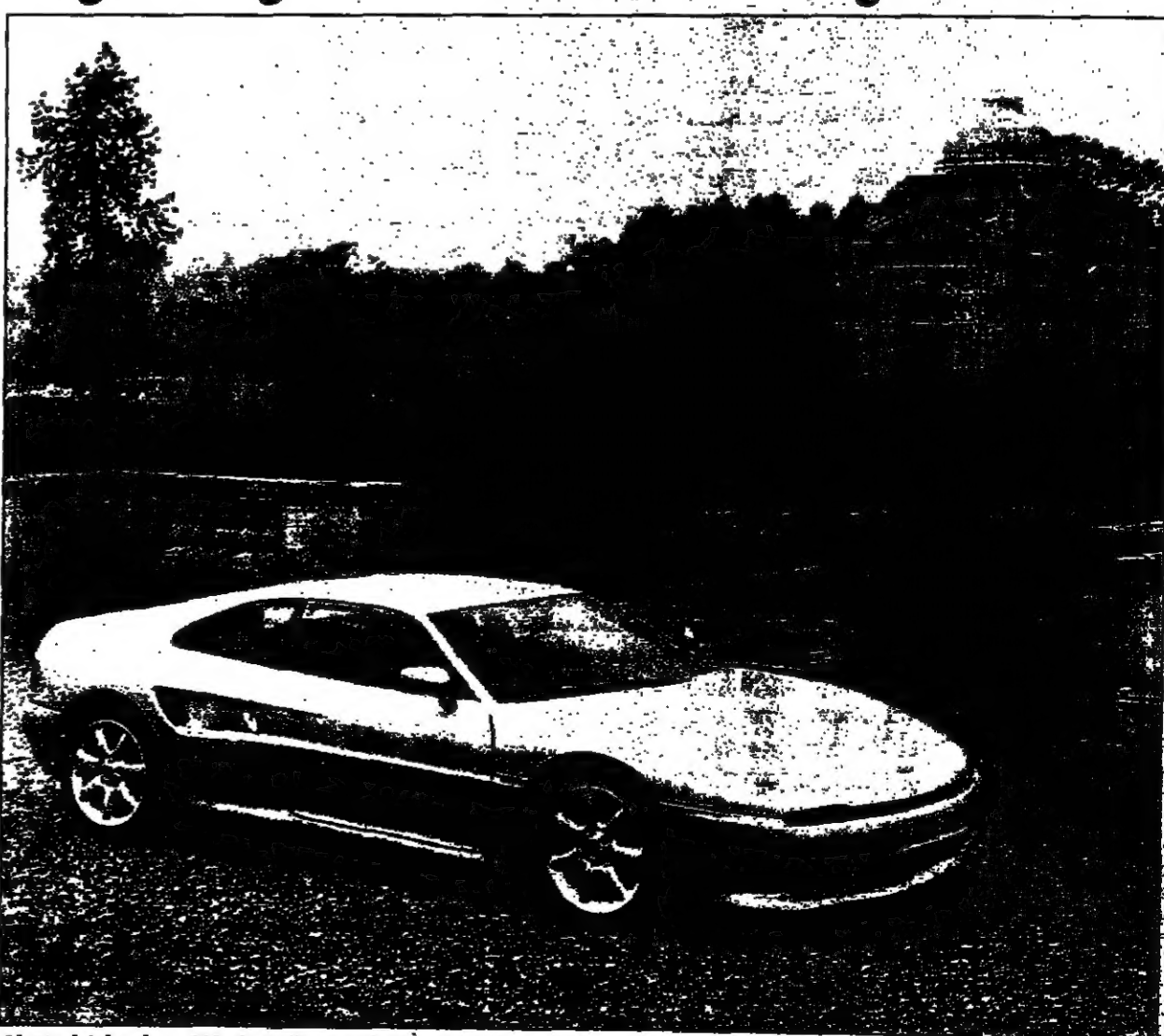
mounts smallish individual instruments in a burr-walnut setting.

Bridge of Weir leather trim completes a welcoming club environment, the seats are well shaped and comfortable, and for a squat two-seater there is a lot of space. While casual stowage is confined to four small lidded boxes, there is space for long-weekend luggage under the bonnet and behind the engine.

The engine grows affably, the steering is nicely weighted, the turning circle is tight and the only thing which militates against ease is the height at which you drive — the roof is 3ft 10in above the road and you have a handspan of headroom below that.

While the full 281hp is not delivered until 5300rpm, the turbocharger comes in a warble and a whirr at about 2700rpm, and in a car weighing less than 2500kg that can mean only one thing — a rush of incremental impetus that leaves all but the fiercest opposition blinking.

But while this is a blatant opportunist of a car, it is also a gorgeous cruiser, settling into arrow-straight stability, mechanical noises such as they are (at 70mph in fifth, the



Venturi Atlantique 300: those lines and curves are elegantly drawn yet compactly athletic and the car is instantly friendly

engine is only doing 2500rpm) lost in the reassuring rumble of broad low-profile Michelins. The faster the Venturi runs, the smoother it rides.

Mee rates it a natural alternative for customers sated on Porsches and intends a modest 25 a year, so rarity should be a no-charge extra. Buyers will be welcome at Nantes and Mee intends to be at the Earl's Court Motor Show. He wants to see Venturi in the "pyramid of icons" to which small boys of all ages aspire. (Initial experience suggests it is well worthy of a place.)



The cabin acknowledges no current fad and nothing is going to look dated in a hurry. Bridge of Weir leather trim completes a welcoming club environment, seats are well shaped and comfortable, and for a squat two-seater there is a lot of space.

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One man went to mow... Stuart Birch relaxes with a radio as a Japanese tractor takes the strain out of gardening

Sit down, tune in and cut the grass

It's time to mow the grass. So relax in your garden chair, pour a gin and tonic and tune the radio to the Test match. For close by is the Kub, just awaiting orders to transform an embryo hayfield into a green crewcut.

This radio-controlled horticultural wonder, the PX-2100 mower, is made by the Japanese company Kubota. With four-wheel drive, four-wheel steer, a 927cc diesel engine and drive-by-wire technology, it cuts a dash in any garden. All you do is operate a couple of little joysticks on a radio controller which look after acceleration, braking, steering and forward and reverse func-

tions. And that — more or less — is that.

Kubota's UK marketing manager, Stuart Ellis, gave me some dual instruction before I made my first solo, the Kub accelerating to 50mph in four seconds. Would it end up in the pond? Up a tree? In the road? In fact, it was all very simple and within minutes I was stretching out lazily in my chair watching the Kub scything a 5ft wide swathe of grass 100 yards away.

The PX-2100 is a king among the garden tractor set and at £18,000 including VAT, so it should be. Said Ellis: "We sell them mainly to water companies which need to cut grass on steep slopes and don't want to risk an operator on a regular tractor. It will climb a 35 degree slope, but it is fine for domestic use too. Like other garden tractors, it does not give the sort of immaculate finish that a cylinder mower with roller will provide, but for people with large grass areas it will cope very well."

In Britain the market for ride-ons and garden tractors (a ride-on has a rear engine, a tractor a front engine) has soared in the past 10 years. As well as the exotic PX-2100, Kubota produces a wide range and there are many other makes from which to choose, starting at around £1,000.

Philip Knott, general manager of Mokut, of Spellbrook, Hertfordshire, says that ride-ons are generally fine for up to an acre. After that potential



Stuart Birch sends the PX-2100 off to work: "Within minutes I was stretching out lazily in my chair watching the Kub scything a 5ft wide swathe of grass 100 yards away"

customers really should look at tractors, which have a wider cutter deck and more power.

Buying a tractor is a little like buying a car. So test drive it before deciding. Check on manoeuvrability and turning circle. On some models a grass sweeper or collector adds considerably to the length. Ensure that the steering is not heavy, the gearbox is light and easy to use, the brake pedal well positioned and the seat supportive. Raising and lowering

the cutter deck should be simple and not call for much muscle power.

Most tractors are petrol powered, although Kubota's range are all diesel except for one petrol model. Like cars, ride-ons and garden tractors depreciate the moment they are used. Typically, after two years value has dropped by two-thirds, although a diesel Kubota should

be worth more. Cheaper ones tend to be traded in after two or three years and often are not thoroughly serviced. Bigger tractors are generally looked after more carefully and kept longer. They should last for at least 10 years. But beware service costs: "They are usually more than a car," warns Knott.

I have an American V-twin Snapper with 16HP engine and hydrostatic drive. It will cut a paddock, pull a small

harrow, roller or trailer and is wonderful entertainment for young children; tractor rides in a mucky trailer — with a sharp eye to safety — are a *rigueur* up to the age of five.

But its winter service costs £172. Typically, a tractor service is between £100 and £140 including new cutter blades and belts, says Knott. The cost also covers collection, delivery and steam cleaning. "Air-cooled garden tractors get very dusty and need thorough

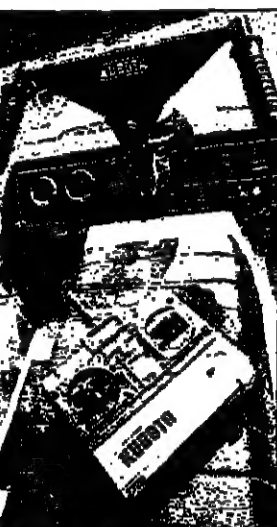
cleaning. The fuel tank is normally emptied and cleaned too, because debris and grass may get in when refuelling."

So that chugging little grass-slicing tractor can be expensive. But it can be good fun to use — even without "radio control. Driving my Snapper with Walkman earphones in place and ear defenders clamped over the top to keep tractor noises at bay they must meet EU noise and safety legislation, is a pleas-

ant way to spend a few hours on a sunny afternoon. I can pretend I'm a man of the soil.

Or I could until Roy Wilkinson, my farmer neighbour who is into serious tractors, spotted me. From the cyle of his cab across the fence came a shouted question and a friendly wave: "What do you do when you've finished playing — trundle it under the bed with the other toys?"

I just tapped the ear defenders and said I couldn't hear.



The Kub's control centre

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